

# Implementing community-based policing in Kenya



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**COVER PHOTO:** A policewoman and children at a community-based policing open day in Kibera, Kenya; JAMES NDUNG'U.

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SAFERWORLD

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# Introduction

*“There can be no security without development and no development without security, and neither can be sustained in the long term without being rooted in the rule of law and respect for human rights.”*

Former Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan

There is increasing recognition that without security there can be no development. Insecurity hinders socio-economic growth in different ways: threats to physical security, the absence of safe living environments, dangers that prevent people from achieving sustainable livelihoods, and the impact upon health and education services. As one of the main providers of security, the police play a pivotal role in creating the conditions in which development can take place. However, all too often those who are most affected by insecurity have little opportunity to engage constructively with the police. This can result in feelings of mistrust between the police and the communities they serve.

**A banner at the community-based policing open day and medical camp in Kibera**

JAMES NDUNG’U, SAFERWORLD



Community-based policing (CBP) is an approach to policing that brings together the police, civil society and local communities to develop local solutions to local safety and security concerns. This helps to improve community safety, reduce crime and the fear of crime, enhance access to justice and create more peaceful communities. CBP, whilst a policing style, is also an attitude of mind, both for the police and for the public. It involves a profound shift in police and community thinking about policing.

In Kenya, police reform is a critical issue not only for community safety and economic development, but because there is intense popular demand for reduced crime and better police performance. Since 2003, Saferworld, in collaboration with its local partner PeaceNet, has developed and implemented a CBP programme in Kenya. The programme aims to improve relations between the police and communities, and to enable them to work together to find solutions to community safety concerns. This has been achieved through the creation of inter-agency partnerships, community involvement and collaboration with key stakeholders, including the Office of the President, the Kenya Police and the Administration Police. The CBP approach has been tested and developed in two pilot sites supported by Saferworld.

The results achieved and challenges encountered in each area are detailed below, along with the main lessons learned. There has been progress in each area, with perhaps the most notable achievement being the improvement in security registered by police and residents in the pilot sites. According to police reports, the CBP approach to addressing insecurity has resulted in crime rates being reduced by up to 40% in one of the pilot sites, and businesses and schools have opened their doors once again. This is underpinned by increased trust between police officers and residents, and increased accountability of the police to the participating communities.

However, there continue to be major obstacles to police reform in Kenya. Crime rates are still very high, there is widespread corruption, and policing approaches and actors are often politicised. These challenges, alongside the uneven pace of reform, have limited progress in extending CBP to other parts of Kenya and improving safety for the rest of Kenya's population.

This publication documents the main activities carried out by Saferworld and its partners in support of Kenyan police reform during the last five years, including training for police and community leaders; development of a national policy on community policing; strategic planning with the police; and establishing CBP projects at two pilot sites – Isiolo and Kibera. It aims to increase understanding of the concept of CBP by illustrating how it is working in the Kenyan context. By examining both the achievements and the challenges of CBP in Kenya, the booklet goes on to suggest some lessons that can be learned from this experience.

## 1

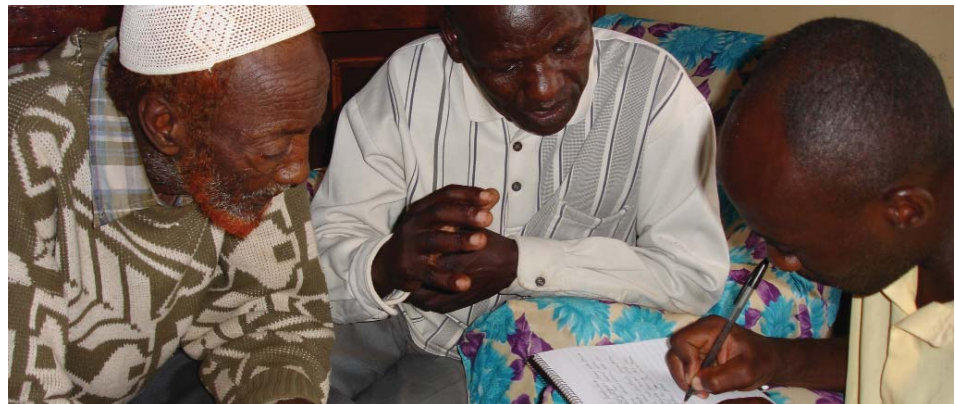
# Community-based policing: the concept'

Access to justice, safety and the right to live without fear is important for everyone, not least those living in deprived urban and rural communities. Since the early 1990s, donor governments, as part of a broader development and governance agenda, have supported security sector reform programmes with police forces across the developing world, with the aim of turning them into professional and accountable services.

Different styles of, and approaches to CBP have been adopted around the world, for example in South Africa, Kosovo and Bosnia. This publication focuses on a CBP approach that has been developed by Saferworld and its partners in Kenya from 2003, and is one which places local communities at the centre of its approach. While it is tailored to Kenya's national safety

**Members of Isiolo Steering  
Committee and police  
officers at a planning session** →

JAMES NDUNG'U, SAFERWORLD





and security requirements, it provides specific responses to local community needs, expectations and cultures. Fundamental to the whole approach is the adoption of democratic principles and practices.

### **Definition of community-based policing**

CBP is both a *philosophy* (a way of thinking) and an *organisational strategy* (a way of carrying out the philosophy), that allows the police and the community to work together in new ways to solve problems of crime, disorder and safety issues to improve the quality of life for everyone in that community.

Recognising that communities are best placed to identify their own security and safety needs and how they can be met, communities must be actively involved in planning and implementing locally-defined solutions to their problems. Community members also play a key role in monitoring progress and providing feedback.

“A key consideration for the success of CBP is the public identifying the security challenges that they face and working with the police and other stakeholders to deal with them.”

### **What is meant by ‘community-based policing’?**

The following can be considered as the fundamental principles of CBP:

- practise policing by consent not coercion
- be part of the community not apart from it
- find out (together with the community) what the community's needs are
- work in partnership with other agencies and the public
- tailor the ‘business’ of policing to meet the community's needs
- be accountable for its ‘business service’
- provide a quality service

### **Characteristics of community-based policing**

The above principles can be translated into a set of characteristics of the police in a CBP paradigm. The police need to be:

- a service not a force
- accountable to the law and the public
- open and identifiable
- professional
- people-centred – including, for instance, sensitivities around gender, age, and group identities
- delivering a quality service – efficient and effective
- visible and accessible
- consultative and participative
- proactive
- preventative



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## Benefits of community-based policing

This approach to CBP:

- Makes safety and security everybody's responsibility, not just that of the law enforcement agencies
- Enables the community to have a say in safety and security issues as they understand the issue
- Maximises resources within the community through shared responsibility and joint efforts
- Improves police accountability to the community by providing mechanisms for addressing complaints
- Mobilises the community to address pertinent issues beyond their immediate security, e.g. development
- Contributes to safer societies leading to enhanced economic development
- Encourages networking, constructive social relations and greater cohesion within the community
- Improves trust and confidence between community and the police

This model of CBP has informed Saferworld's contributions to international work on security sector reform (SSR), in particular to the OECD-DAC Handbook on Security System Reform, a best practice guide on SSR.

## 2

# Towards police reform in Kenya

*“In the history of Kenya, people have always feared people in uniform.”*

Senior police officer

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## The need for reform

Since independence in 1963, Kenya has made considerable progress in terms of economic and political development and tends to be viewed as one of the most secure and stable countries in Africa. The country prides itself on playing a leading role in promoting peace and security in its region, for example, in the Somalia and Sudan peace processes. Nevertheless, its citizens suffer from high levels of insecurity. Violent crime involving firearms is common and is a significant cause of social and economic degeneration in poor communities. Insecurity was identified in the country’s *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* as being a principal source of poverty.<sup>2</sup>

Social inequalities, the availability of small arms, inadequate police capacity, and distrust between the police and communities all fuel Kenya’s high levels of crime and insecurity. Common criminal activities include armed robbery, car-jacking, rape, murder and mugging. In the pastoralist districts of Kenya, cattle rustling and cross-border incursions are widespread. These practices have become much more lethal with the easy availability of illegal arms as a result of the conflicts in neighbouring Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. There is also a history of ethnic clashes generally motivated by competition over access to resources, and often exacerbated by political manipulation.

During the long period of rule by Kenya's former President Moi, the country's police were ill-suited to many of these challenges. Heavily politicised and with a serious record of human rights violations, their focus was on protecting the security of the regime rather than the safety of citizens. In addition, the country maintained two national police forces, the Kenya Police and the Administration Police, with overlapping functions and unclear division of roles and responsibilities. Issues such as these form the backdrop for attempts to reform the police in Kenya

### A mandate for reform

Efforts by civil society and donors to engage the Moi Government in discussions on police reform had been ongoing for years without much success. A breakthrough seemingly occurred at a regional meeting of government experts on gun control in Kampala in June 2001<sup>3</sup>, with senior officers in the Kenyan Police leaving the conference intrigued by accounts of 'community-based policing'. In March 2002 in response to mounting public pressure, the Office of the President mandated the creation of a national steering committee on community policing.

A community information  
drop-in box at Kibera  
pilot site →

JAMES NDUNG'U, SAFERWORLD



In subsequent workshops among government agencies, police and civil society in mid-2002, participants recommended that moves towards CBP in Kenya should prioritise some key issues including accountability, empowerment of local communities on safety and security issues, partnerships between police and public, improving public confidence and trust in the police, and greater access to justice particularly for the poor and disadvantaged. The aim was to reduce crime and the fear of crime through a proactive and preventative approach to policing.

In December 2002, Kenya elected a government with a popular mandate for police reform, laying the ground for more rapid progress.<sup>4</sup> When the new government took power in 2003, the challenge for it and for the police forces was to develop new systems, partnerships and policies to address the high levels of crime and violence, and broader public dissatisfaction with the police. To find out more about security and safety concerns of its citizens, a national consultation was undertaken, led by the Government of Kenya and supported by civil society organisations. The consultation concluded that the public wanted the police to be more responsive to community needs. It also revealed that communities were willing to support the police and wished to be more involved in their own policing. It became clear that a fundamental transformation of the culture and attitudes of the police was required. The adoption of a CBP approach provided the vehicle for a police reform agenda which would be based on partnership, shared responsibility, greater transparency and accountability.

# 3

## Community-based policing in practice

The Government recognised that a successful and sustainable police reform programme required partnerships with civil society. Following the national consultation, Saferworld was requested by the Government of Kenya to support the police reform agenda, working through the Office of the President. Initially, the programme focused on six key areas: strategic management, national policy development, training, capacity-building and institutional development, establishment of pilot sites, and a media and outreach strategy. After an assessment of the programme in 2006, it was revised and refined to focus on three key areas: policy development and implementation, transforming CBP pilot sites into model sites, and capacity-building. Implemented in partnership with the Office of the President, the Kenya Police, the Administration Police and civil society, the programme has made significant progress in these areas as well as in strategic management development.

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### Training and capacity-building

*“To start with our leaders weren’t educated. Then they got trained, they trained us and now we have trained many more people.”*

**Kibera resident**

When the CBP programme first began in Kenya, one of the key challenges identified was the limited capacity of various stakeholders to implement it.

Saferworld has supported a variety of institutions to address these capacity gaps through technical advice and training. Support on developing crime prevention strategies was

provided to the Community Policing Unit within the Kenya Police. Assistance with data management to the Kenya Police Department for Planning, Research and Training, and advice on communication and media strategies, was provided to the Administration Police.

Training was central to expanding the understanding of CBP and enabling its implementation. Working with the Office of the President, Saferworld worked with the Kenya Police Training College, Kenya Institute of Administration and the Administration Police Training College to develop a curriculum for training in CBP. The curriculum was launched in February 2004 with subsequent cascade training for police officers and civil society groups. The training curriculum has modules that include an introduction to CBP, legal framework and human rights, society and CBP, strategic management, crime prevention and reduction, and partnership policing. Great emphasis is placed on changing organisational culture, and individual behaviour and attitudes.<sup>5</sup> On the basis of this, Saferworld, PeaceNet, Kenya Police, Administration Police and representatives from the pilot sites have developed standardised CBP training materials for use in training for communities and law enforcement agencies.

By 2006, 40 Administration Police officers, 40 District Commissioners, 120 District Officers and 60 Officers Commanding Police Divisions of the Kenya Police had been trained in CBP. 80 community and civil society representatives were also trained as trainers, who in turn have trained numerous police and public representatives on CBP. Core teams of three trainers (one Kenya Police, one Administration Police and one civil society representative) now exist in each of Kenya's eight provinces and are responsible for co-ordinating training in their areas.

Joint training of civil society representatives alongside Kenya Police and Administration Police officers conducted by both civilian and police trainers helped remove barriers and increase trust.<sup>6</sup> Both the curriculum and individual training modules were developed in consultation with civil society groups and the residents of CBP pilot sites in locally appropriate languages. There is also good evidence from feedback sessions that trainings resulted in positive changes in the knowledge and attitude of a significant number of trainees.

Saferworld has provided other forms of support to strengthen the capacity to implement CBP in Kenya. For example, in 2006 and 2007, Saferworld organised study-tours to the UK for senior Government officials from the Administration Police, the Kenya National Focal Point on Small Arms, the National Steering Committee on Peace Building, and the Provincial Administration. A central component of these study-tours was exposure to policing approaches in the UK, with a particular emphasis upon CBP.

"I have been in the Kenya Police for 18 years and I now realise that all that time I have been doing things wrong. Now I know how to do things right and I intend to do so for the rest of my service."

**CBP trainee from the Kenya  
Institute of Administration**

## The development of a national policy

Prior to the development of a national community policing policy, aside from the constitutional debate that sought to clarify the mandate of the police services, there was no state-owned and comprehensive reform programme for Kenya's security sector. There was also no comprehensive policy on security.

The development of a national policy was identified as a key priority as early as 2002, but only started in earnest with the creation of the National Task Force on Police Reforms, appointed by the President in 2003, with a sub-committee charged with the development of the community policing policy. The aim was to develop a draft policy and Standard Operating Procedures for CBP implementation. This process gained momentum at a time when the Governance, Justice, Law and Order<sup>7</sup> programme was embracing a sector-wide approach to support policy and legislative reform.

Saferworld and PeaceNet worked closely with the Office of the President and the Task Force to ensure that the policy reflected CBP principles, and national and international best practice, and encouraged the process of developing the policy involved and promoted dialogue between the government and other stakeholders. This draft policy formed the basis of consultations with communities across Kenya.

A CBP training for police and community organised by Saferworld at the Kenya Institute of Administration

JAMES NDUNG'U, SAFERWORLD





By November 2004, a draft policy was completed and published as an annex to the Government's Police Reform Framework. However, as outlined below, subsequent delays in the development and ratification of the national policy have hampered the process of implementing CBP in Kenya.

A set of Standard Operating Procedures for community policing was launched by the President in April 2005. In addition, Saferworld helped to develop and produce a citizen's handbook on CBP to raise awareness amongst communities about CBP and provide them with clear and simple guidelines of how to implement CBP at the local level.

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### Strategic planning

As part of the police reform process, both the Administration Police and Kenya Police were required to produce five-year strategic development plans as a means to help manage competing demands and identify clear priorities. As a first step in supporting this process, a core team of 22 Kenya police officers were trained on strategic management. Saferworld provided CBP training and advised heads of departments responsible for planning and training. There was no direct input into the content of the Kenya Police's five-year plan, but their plans embraced the reform agenda and included a clear commitment to implement its priorities and objectives. In June 2005, a further 30 Kenya Police officers were trained on development of work plans based on their strategic plan.

For the Administration Police, the senior management entered into a formal agreement whereby Saferworld provided technical expertise and support at what was a critical juncture for the Administration Police. This involved a range of stakeholders and community representatives in a process of consultation and participation to shape the strategy based on the needs and expectations of the public it served.

Following training in strategic planning, both organisations developed institutional development plans that set out their vision, mission and objectives. In a deliberate break with the past, both organisations' plans put improved service delivery to Kenyan citizens as their core goals and used open consultations when preparing drafts.<sup>8</sup> The plans also helped to clarify the roles of Kenya's two police organisations with the Kenya Police focusing primarily on preventing and detecting crime down to the station level, and the Administration Police focusing on community safety and conflict resolution at the local level, particularly in rural areas.

### Strategic plans for Kenya's two police services

The Kenya Police strategic plan has six objectives:<sup>9</sup>

- To prevent and detect crime, maintain law and order and bring offenders to justice
- To improve human resource development
- To improve and expand facilities, equipment and technology to enhance service delivery
- To build a positive image for the police service
- To strengthen the institutional framework
- To improve disaster management operations

The Administration Police's vision in its strategic plan is "To be the leading community safety provider with a focus on quality service to the public"<sup>10</sup>. The plan outlines its core functions as:

- Community-based policing
- Border security
- Emergency response
- Protective security
- Enforcement assistance to government departments

### Piloting community-based policing at the local level

Since 2003, a variety of community-based policing projects and sites have been launched across Kenya. Two of these sites (Kibera and Isiolo) have largely been established and managed by Saferworld and Kenyan civil society partners. The lessons and experiences garnered in each site have subsequently been used to inform national thinking and practice on CBP. The type of activities carried out in each site has varied but has included: training and awareness-raising on CBP for police officers and communities, the establishment of Community Safety and Information Centres, support for practical projects, and anonymous information 'drop-in' boxes (*Toa Habari kwa Polisi*) posted across the two pilot sites in order to facilitate information exchange on community safety issues.

In 2006, Saferworld and PeaceNet undertook an assessment of the pilot sites to document and review its methodology, activities, achievements and challenges. The section below draws heavily on the findings of that assessment, and as a result both organisations are working to improve the capacities of the CBP steering committees and forums in each site and to clarify the functions of the Community Safety and Information Centres.

#### Kibera

Situated to the south-west of Kenya's capital, Nairobi, Kibera is one of the largest slum dwellings in Africa with an estimated population of 800,000 who suffer some of the worst living conditions of any urban community. There is very limited access to basic services such

as health, water and education for Kibera's residents, who come from every corner of Kenya in search of employment and a better life. Poverty forces many of Kibera's youth to engage in petty crime to supplement their household's income.

*"I was born in Kibera. I know what Kibera used to be and what it is now. Long ago we used to walk late in the night and the only fear was an attack by wild animals; yet now we are afraid not of animals but of human beings. I am motivated to reclaim that space and make Kibera safe once again."*

**Kibera resident**

Although there is a strong sense of community – many people settle in villages made up of members from their own ethnic communities – external factors can create tensions between these different communities, leading to increased insecurity, vulnerability and violence. However, the main causes of crime are the economic and social conditions in Kibera. The rapid growth of the population has put pressure on resources like food, shelter and water and people are forced to compete to meet their basic needs.

**A street in Gatwekera, Kibera pilot site** →

JAMES NDUNG'U, SAFERWORLD



High levels of poverty and unemployment drive many people to engage in criminal activities to survive. Crime in Kibera takes a range of different forms ranging from mugging – commonly referred to as ‘*ngeta*’ – house break-ins and handling stolen property. Like many places in Kenya crime in the slum follows particular trends. For instance, while mugging happens on a daily basis, house break-ins tend to occur over holiday periods when criminals know that families may not be at home. Criminals often increase activities during the rainy seasons from April to June and September to December, as the sound of heavy rain obscures victims’ cries for help. Violent crimes tend to occur mainly on pay days and mostly late at night and over the weekends. The periods prior to elections also often lead to an increase in crime as thieves take advantage of the highly charged political environment to steal from residents. As one Kibera resident put it: thieves “go shopping” during election time.

Crime and violence have fractured relations between different communities in Kibera. Early settlers view recently arrived ‘immigrants’ to the slum as the source of criminality and particular ethnic groups are singled out for blame. A culture of fear because of crime and violence has emerged and many people have stopped attending social ceremonies for fear of attack or house-robbery.

*“Now we secure ourselves and our property so much that we employ people to watch over our houses even when attending wedding ceremonies in the neighbourhood. In the early 1970s we all knew each other but population growth has compromised all this.”*

**Kibera resident**

### **Piloting community-based policing in Kibera**

The aim of the CBP programme in Kibera was to reclaim peace and security for its residents by responding to their safety and security concerns. There are 10 ‘villages’ within Kibera and one of these villages, Makina, was identified as an appropriate location for the CBP pilot site. Consultations with the local community (including members from the business community, religious leaders, tenants and landlords) and local police produced a detailed analysis of the factors fuelling crime and insecurity in the area. These were identified as poverty, a lack of employment opportunities, breakdown of social relations and anger related to living conditions. The CBP programme responded to these factors through a range of activities focused on crime prevention and victim support, including:

- Consultations with members of the community, civil society and police on how to develop a CBP model that responds to the needs of the local community.
- Setting up a taskforce including community organisations, the Administration Police, Kenya Police, Kibera Provincial Administration, PeaceNet and Saferworld. This taskforce developed a local strategy to take forward CBP in Kibera.

**Two of the Kibera CBP  
Steering Committee  
members** →

SONIA RAI, SAFERWORLD



- The creation of a 20-member Steering Committee of key stakeholders, including community-based organisations, women, youth, elders and religious leaders, the Officer Commanding Police Station, Kilimani, and the officer in charge of the Administration Police in Kibera. PeaceNet provided secretariat and administrative services to the Steering Committee programme, while Saferworld provided financial and technical support.
- Training to equip the Steering Committee and communities with an understanding of the principles and practice of CBP.
- A joint police-community forum was established and meets monthly enabling members of the community, civil society and the police to identify appropriate strategies to tackle crime in the area. PeaceNet and Saferworld provided support to implement them.
- A police open day and medical camp where police provided free medical check-up and other services, was organised to help build trust and give communities and police an opportunity to interact.

## **Aims, objectives and priorities – the Kibera CBP Steering Committee**

### **Aim**

To prevent crime, increase safety and reduce the proliferation of small arms by building trust between the police and the local communities.

### **Objectives**

- i. To promote long-term conditions for development and community safety
- ii. To build the capacity of the local institutions and people in the co-ordination and implementation of CBP programme
- iii. To strengthen the co-operation and the partnership between the police and the public
- iv. To strengthen interaction between the civil society, government and institutions with an interest in promoting a culture of peace, community safety and democratic policing

### **Priority initiatives**

1. Training and institutional capacity development
2. Resource mobilisation and networking
3. Information exchange
4. Public awareness raising
5. Community education

### **Stakeholders identified the following as expected outcomes of this programme**

- Improved trust between the police and the public
- Linkages developed between development and security
- Co-ordination of CBP initiative in Kibera
- Well-trained and professional police who respect human rights
- Established Community Safety Information Centres
- Forum for information exchange
- Reduced level of crime in the community
- Increased reportage of crime through the efforts of victims and affected groups

## **Achievements in Kibera**

One of the most important factors contributing to the success of the CBP approach in Kibera has been the degree to which stakeholders worked together to generate a shared sense of ownership and commitment by the whole community throughout the programme. A wide range of stakeholders from the Administration Police, the Kenya Police, the Provincial Administration, the business community and residents have actively participated throughout each phase of the programme and have developed solid partnerships. This has enabled successful implementation of CBP in Kibera.

*“Police have held awareness campaigns and open days through which we interact with them. This reduces fear of police and enables us to feel free to report criminal activities in Kibera.”*

**CBP Steering Committee member**



**Former Administration  
Police Training College  
Commandant donating food  
at a local church**

ROBERT KIHICO, ADMINISTRATION  
POLICE TRAINING COLLEGE



The development of a style of policing that is accountable and responsive to the needs of communities has had a tangible impact on the lives of community members. The outcomes include:

- The sharing of information between communities and police officers has helped police to take action to prevent crime and insecurity. Information boxes called ‘*Toa Habari kwa Polisi*’ (volunteering information to the police) allow individuals to pass information confidentially to police officers to prevent and reduce crime.
- Police are now able to reach neighbourhoods, like Gatwekera village, that were previously classified as ‘no-go’ areas. Increased police patrols have led to improved security for residents in these neighbourhoods.
- The long-term prospects for CBP in Kibera have been improved by increased awareness within the community of what it means. Training has been central to this and was made more effective by being led by people within the community and by presenting the information in a lively, easy to understand way. The trainers have worked with local theatre groups to stage dramas raising awareness of the CBP and its potential benefit for the community.
- The CBP forum gave the community an opportunity to develop and implement initiatives to improve safety such as building gates and perimeter fences around certain estates, and sealing estate corridors to track the entry and exit of individuals into neighbourhoods.



**A local community queues at a police-run health camp in Kibera** →

JAMES NDUNG'U, SAFERWORLD

“We sought medical help (and we were able to interact with the police and realise that they too were people like us. Now I don't fear the police because I learned that we can work well together.”

**Kibera resident**



- The CBP forum has reached out to younger members of the community who are both victims and perpetrators of crime in Kibera. Young people are involved in efforts to improve safety for example through theatre. Communities have also launched a number of campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers of drugs.
- The CBP programme has given citizens in Kibera greater confidence to openly discuss the safety and security issues that confront them in their day-to-day lives. Awareness-raising activities have empowered local communities to demand more support from their local political representatives.
- The CBP programme has opened up opportunities for new partnerships to emerge. For example; the local development fund, the Lang'ata Constituency Development Fund and Adopt-a-Light<sup>11</sup> have put up high mast flood lights in Kibera to light up the dark alleys frequented by criminals. The street lighting project has reduced the incidences of mugging by lighting 'crime hot-spots' and has reduced fear of crime amongst residents.

Overall, the piloting of CBP in Kibera has served to improve trust and co-operation between the police, civil society and communities there. Monitoring by PeaceNet and Saferworld shows that many residents now feel more comfortable approaching police officers in confidence and have more faith they will receive support. Police officers interviewed feel better equipped for crime prevention because they have the support of the community behind them.

The Kiberan site has also been held up as a model for police stations elsewhere in the country and the experience of residents and officers living and working there has influenced national policy development. Teams of high-ranking police officers from regions across Kenya have visited Kibera as part of a training process overseen by Police Headquarters. Yet these gains remain hostage to factors largely beyond the control of individual officers or community members, including staff rotation, competition over resources among community organisations, and violence arising from inter-ethnic or political tensions.

### **Isiolo**

In contrast to Kibera, Isiolo is situated in a rural setting in Eastern Province of Kenya. Isiolo is home to five ethnic communities – Borana, Turkana, Somali, Meru and Samburu. Many communities rely on pastoralism and farming whilst those in urban areas are mostly involved in business and the public sector. Between 1996 and 2000, insecurity in Isiolo transformed the district into a ‘no go zone’. The district was known as the ‘arms supermarket’ of Kenya due to its location at the gateway to North-Eastern Province which borders Ethiopia and Somalia, and from where most illegal arms are smuggled into Kenya.

The main causes of crime in Isiolo relate to social and economic factors. High levels of unemployment amongst the young and increasing levels of drug abuse and prostitution among some sectors of society have forced many to resort to petty crime. Women are

#### **Bula Pesa Isiolo pilot site** →

JAMES NDUNG’U, SAFERWORLD



particularly vulnerable to attack on market days, whilst crime and insecurity levels in rural areas are linked to weather patterns. The circumcision period also triggers an increase in crime, particularly cattle raiding, as young initiates seek to fulfil traditional requirements that accompany this rite of passage.

Prior to the introduction of CBP, crime and gun violence were the main causes of fear and insecurity among communities in Isiolo. Many businesses were forced to relocate and the banking sector was particularly affected by increased crime. This reduced the pace of development and led to a decline in the quality of life for many residents. The loss of live-stock due to cattle rustling meant that many pastoralists were no longer able to sustain their communities. The loss of livestock also had a devastating social impact because for many communities the possession of cattle defines status.

### **Piloting community-based policing in Isiolo**

The location of Bulla-Pesa was identified as an appropriate location for the pilot site in Isiolo. The main objectives of the CBP programme in Bulla-Pesa are to prevent crime, improve community safety and reduce the proliferation of small arms. Improved partnership, communication and interaction between communities and police are enabling these objectives to become a reality.

The first step was to raise awareness and support for the philosophy and principles of CBP among stakeholders in the Isiolo District Peace Committee. Following this, relationships between communities, local police and local government officials – including those involved in the Arid Land Resource Management Project (ALRMP) – were built to develop a CBP programme that responded to the specific safety and security concerns of the residents there. Similarly, Saferworld and PeaceNet entered into a partnership agreement with the District Peace Committee to help local communities to work together on security problems in the district. 18 people were selected from three areas in the Bulla-Pesa location in Isiolo to form a Steering Committee, which includes representatives of communities, the Kenya Police, the Administration Police and the local Provincial Administration.

The CBP Steering Committee have organised a range of different activities to raise awareness of CBP among local communities and to ensure that people recognise the need to engage with local police to tackle security and safety issues. Members of the community were trained on the principles and practice of CBP. Residents participate in community safety forums every month or through weekly *barazas* (open forums). The forums give communities an opportunity to raise specific security and safety concerns with local government and security agencies and to generate joint solutions.

*“You cannot do development work without security. Before CBP was introduced in Isiolo, gunshots were a common occurrence. But now, things have changed for the better.”*

ALRMP officer<sup>12</sup>

“Prior to the introduction of CBP, most schools had been closed down due to insecurity in Isiolo. Now, a total of 16 schools have re-opened and learning is going on without interruption.”

**Isiolo resident**

### **Achievements in Isiolo**

Members of the local community, police, ALRMP, District Peace Committee, PeaceNet and Saferworld have worked together to develop and implement a CBP programme tailored to the specific safety and security requirements of Bulla-Pesa. The strong partnership between these different groups has led to a number of achievements, including some very tangible impacts:

- An increase in the number of incidents reported to the police and dealt with. As the public feel more confident to report criminal incidents, the police have been able to deal more effectively with these cases and provide feedback to the community on the steps taken and progress made.
- More people are handing over illegal small arms to the Peace Building and Conflict Management Office which works closely with the CBP Steering Committee. This is managed by community representatives who transfer the guns to Kenya Police officers for safe-keeping and destruction.
- Awareness-raising activities have ensured that communities and officials in three zones of Bulla-Pesa are familiar with the CBP approach.
- Community leaders, Kenya Police and Administration Police have organised joint training activities.
- The Kenya Police have opened a customer care office in Isiolo so that people can access information relating to their security needs.
- Members of the community and the police are carrying out joint patrol activities in Bulla-Pesa.
- Initiatives to get young people involved in CBP activities have been organised enabling them to play a key role in bringing about safety for their communities.
- A number of schools have re-opened and children are returning to the classrooms. Before the CBP programme began, 16 schools were forced to close down due to insecurity. Improved security and safety as a result of CBP activities has allowed all of them to re-open.
- Business is once again flourishing in Bulla-Pesa. There are now five banks operating in the area, all of which had previously closed down or relocated due to the problems of insecurity. Furthermore, whereas shops in Bulla-Pesa were previously forced to close before 6pm because of insecurity, they are now open until 9pm.
- Tourism is booming. Over half of Isiolo County Council’s revenue is generated from tourist lodges, namely the Serena and Buffalo Springs lodges. These lodges are registering increasing numbers of guests now that insecurity is no longer a deterrent to visiting the area.
- Communities now engage in the design of development projects – such as water tanks for primary schools, and boreholes and bridges for the community. This is particularly due to the involvement of ALRMP which has proved to be a vital partner in the CBP programme in Isiolo.

## 4

# Challenges

There is still a long way to go and many challenges ahead for police reform in Kenya. Public trust and confidence in the police services remains low. The most recent Transparency International index of corruption in Kenya (August 2007) ranked the 'Kenya police' as the institution perceived as most corrupt in the country. Reforming the two police services in Kenya will mean changes in the way they work and how they deliver effective policing.

## Children at a CBP open day →

JAMES NDUNG'U, SAFERWORLD





Whilst relations between the community and the police have improved since the inception of the community-based policing approaches, there is still some way to go to reverse the legacy of years of negative experiences and poor relations.<sup>13</sup> Political, financial, logistical and historical obstacles within the two police organisations lie behind this, exacerbated by the complexity and capacity problems of the rest of the justice sector.

A number of other challenges, including the following, have affected the progress of reform in Kenya:

- 1. Delays in creating a national vision for CBP** Delays in the development and ratification of the national community policing policy, accompanying implementation guidelines and roll-out plan have presented a considerable challenge to the reform process. At the time that this report went to press, the national policy had still not been ratified.  
  
A lack of a unified approach defined by a national policy has resulted in a proliferation of initiatives, some of which do not adhere to the principles of CBP. The delay in the development and ratification of a national policy has also led to confusion and ambiguity as to what the concept of CBP actually means in practice. Many police officers in Kenya remain uncertain as to what CBP is. According to one senior observer, “many of the police, from junior to senior level, do not understand the new approach”.<sup>14</sup> In other parts of the country there is evidence that the term ‘community policing’ has been used by unscrupulous groups essentially to justify vigilante activities – undermining public perceptions of the term.
- 2. Blockages elsewhere in the justice sector** Furthermore, slow progress on wider reforms of the law and order sector – specifically the courts system – has frustrated efforts of the police, and expectations of the public, to ensure that perpetrators of crime receive due punishment.
- 3. Capacity gaps** While capacity of the police, government institutions and communities to implement CBP has been strengthened, much more is needed to sustain reforms. For example, communities in Isiolo, long deprived of central government support, are keen to participate in community safety initiatives and have high expectations, but a lack of local police capacity makes it difficult to respond to those expectations.
- 4. Staff rotation** The frequent rotation of police officers has undermined the implementation of the CBP programme in Kenya. Officers have been trained to play a role in the reform process only to be transferred to other duties. This is particularly damaging in a context where human and financial resources are overstretched, and has an adverse effect on the continuity, effectiveness and stability of the programme. It can moreover undermine trust and confidence, since work put into building relationships has to start all over again.
- 5. Institutional resistance to change** There is still a widespread lack of understanding about, and full commitment to, reform within some areas of the government and police services. This is compounded by lack of clarity on who among the relevant government departments should take the lead in CBP. This has been hindering implementation.

6. **Poor oversight** For a reform agenda to be successful and accountable, effective oversight mechanisms must be established which are external and independent of government control. A lack of comprehensive, independent and established structures of accountability continues to challenge the CBP approach. More accountability is still required by the police, over for example, their use of firearms and the detention of prisoners.
7. **Resource limitations** While the expectations of communities are high, CBP work in Kenya has not been adequately funded. In some areas, reforms have consequently been broad rather than deep, with resources thinly spread. This has caused fatigue and loss of momentum at both national and local levels.
8. **Low public trust in the police** Despite moves to introduce and publicise CBP, a legacy of suspicion and mistrust between police and communities hampers efforts to build relationships between the police and general public.
9. **Low morale** Low wages, poor working conditions and terms of employment continue to have a negative effect on police morale.
10. **Reliance on traditional justice system** Many Kenyans, whether through choice or necessity, continue to rely on traditional justice systems and policing and police reform in Kenya has not grappled adequately with this fact so far. Traditional justice systems need not impede delivery by the formal sector, but to date few steps have been taken to improve links between the two to reduce the incidence of miscarriages of justice in the informal sector and ensure information continues to flow between the two systems.

These challenges need to be dealt with to move forward with the improvements in policing and access to justice so important to security and economic development in Kenya. The piloting of CBP in Isiolo and Kibera shows that CBP can yield real results. A number of steps need to be taken to address the above challenges and to ensure that more people in Kenya benefit from improved community safety. These include:

1. **Targeted capacity-building** Training on CBP has already taken place among government, civil society and the police. Nevertheless, there is still a need for additional technical assistance and training to support the police services' plans for organisational change and development. This will go some way to overcoming institutional and individual resistance to change.
2. **Encouraging volunteering** The concept of volunteering needs to be engendered in local communities. In contrast to the past, the public should be encouraged to provide information without payment; communities should be made to understand that the reward for providing information is a safer community.
3. **Greater responsiveness to local needs and culture** To ensure long-term success, it is critical that CBP approaches are responsive to local needs. Future work in support of CBP in Kenya could go even further than at present in adapting activities to the specific security of



particular communities as well as their expectations and culture. The presence of traditional justice mechanisms should be featured into programming rather than ignored.

- 4. Improving monitoring and evaluation** To ensure there is evidence of real change and improvement in the security and safety of the community, CBP requires continuous monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and impact. The work of Saferworld and other actors involved in promoting CBP has not been strong in this area. In future, elements such as base-line and tracker studies of the quality of police services and public perceptions will require attention, along with the setting of clear indicators.
- 5. Enhancing oversight mechanisms** For a reform agenda to be successful and accountable, effective oversight mechanisms must be established which are external and independent of government control. The Government of Kenya should revisit previous proposals for a police service commission to oversee recruitment policy and practice as well as other aspects of police conduct.
- 6. Resource reforms** The donor community has been financing police reform in Kenya whether through trust funds or bilateral arrangements. Despite the slow process of reforms it is important that the donor community continues its support for police reform in general and CBP in particular so that the gains made are consolidated and sustained.
- 7. Further enhancing co-ordination** Developing a more co-ordinated approach to crime and justice issues across the sector is a priority. Those supporting governance reforms, including under the Governance, Justice, Law and Order Sector reform programme framework, should take greater account of police reform issues, and the role of CBP in particular. On the part of donors this would also mean sending consistent messages of support for CBP and reflect on how other foreign policy priorities related to the ‘war on terror’ and regional security may detract from a progressive police reform agenda.

## 5

## Lessons learned

The overall aim of this booklet is to raise awareness of how CBP can work in practice and to inform debates on how best to encourage its development elsewhere. The following lessons can be learned from the experience in Kenya and should be applied elsewhere.

**Member of the Steering  
Committee on a street in  
Kibera** →

SONIA RAI, SAFERWORLD



- 1. Synergy between community and national levels** The CBP programme in Kenya has shown the importance of linking initiatives at the national and community levels. For example, the experiences of CBP implementation at the pilot sites have informed the process of developing the Kenyan Government's national community policing policy, by providing appropriate methodologies and grass-roots structures drawn from the communities. The pilot sites have provided a laboratory in which to test and refine police options.
- 2. Build the capacity for reform** A key component of the CBP programme strategy has been to address the capacity of all stakeholders. It is particularly important to strengthen capacity to manage change and institutional reform through, for example, coaching and training for senior managers in the police services. The outcome has been leadership and ownership of the reform agenda, which is helping to make the police services more transparent, adaptable, participative and consultative.

Institutions also need the capacity to manage the change process. At the local level, the CBP Forums established in Kibera and Isiolo have led implementation on the ground and have greatly benefited from the training and targeted support they received.
- 3. The importance of a sector-wide approach** The experience of implementing CBP in Kenya has highlighted the importance of a sector-wide approach to security and justice development.

Some attempts have been made to link CBP activities to broader reform programmes such as the Governance, Justice, Law and Order Sector reform programme so as enable engagement with other ministries and departments. For example, working with the police on strategic development allowed the programme to address not only policing matters but also broader issues such as capacity-building in leadership and planning, and how to change attitudes. While this has proved a difficult process, the Kenyan situation has shown that a sector-wide approach to reform across the justice system has value, for example by helping donors to co-ordinate their support.
- 4. Ownership and participation is crucial** The continued involvement of all stakeholders in the design of the CBP programme has contributed significantly to local ownership and support. With the programme being led by the Office of the President and trainings held jointly between the Kenya Police, the Administration Police, civil society and communities, there has been a sense of ownership and partnership at all levels. This reflects the adoption of democratic principles and practices, which is a key component of the CBP approach.
- 5. Civil society has a broad and vital role in security sector reform** The role of civil society organisations in the CBP programme has shown the critical and central role they can play in security sector reform. Civil society organisations' contribution is often seen as primarily about raising awareness in local communities, but the Kenyan experience has shown the value of a much broader engagement.

Local civil society organisations such as PeaceNet have played a vital role in conducting training, advising on the development of the national policy, supporting implementation at the pilot sites, and encouraging the government to implement police reform. Within pilot sites themselves, community-based organisations have played a leading role in mobilising residents and in designing and implementing community safety projects. Saferworld has supported the programme through providing technical expertise, building the capacity of government institutions and civil society partners, bringing in experiences from other countries, and accessing funding.

**6. Promote accountability** The accountability of the police is a fundamental principle of CBP. The police must be accountable to the law and to the public through independent mechanisms which monitor police performance and service delivery. Some of the ways the CBP programme in Kenya has sought to strengthen accountability are through CBP forums, joint trainings with communities and the development of five-year strategic plans.

**7. The value of partnerships** The experience of implementing CBP in Kenya reinforces the value of developing solid partnerships, between police and communities and between the partners implementing the programme.

Partnerships between local organisations and the police were essential to addressing widespread distrust between police and local communities. Formal memoranda of understanding between the Kenyan Government and civil society were essential to helping to establish clear roles and responsibilities between partners, increasing transparency and confidence. Innovative approaches such as training police and community leaders together, alongside having police and community leaders train each other, have helped to strengthen these partnerships.

**8. Focus on prevention** Crime prevention is a fundamental principle of the CBP model developed in Kenya. Prevention, in its broadest sense, means emphasising the social health and cohesion of communities. Crime prevention has been a core ingredient in the training curriculum and joint training strategy.

**9. Reform takes time** Given the incremental nature of institutional and attitude changes, a key lesson learned is not to underestimate the length of time needed for a reform programme.

The CBP programme was originally conceived as an 18-month programme but this timeframe proved highly unrealistic, particularly in light of the time needed to develop a new national policy on community policing and establish the pilot sites. External actors can help move processes forward but they cannot dictate the pace. The process of building trust and developing partnerships also took considerably longer than originally expected. The experience of implementing police reform in Kenya highlights the value of designing a preparatory phase for programmes in which these activities can help build the foundations for longer-term progress.

## Endnotes

- 1 Saferworld uses and promotes the term “community-based policing”, hence this term is used in the booklet when referring to Saferworld’s programme and associated activities. The Kenyan government uses “community policing”, so this term is used with reference to governmental initiatives, such as the national policy.
- 2 Government of Kenya (2003): *The Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation 2003–2007*, Nairobi.
- 3 The meeting was held to discuss the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration on the Proliferation and Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa. It was organised by the Nairobi Secretariat, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, the Interpol Sub-Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa, Saferworld, SaferAfrica and the Security Research and Information Centre.
- 4 The National Rainbow Coalition manifesto stated that, “Our aim is to build an effective community policing service... Retrain our police force into a modern police service and make it truly ‘Utumishi kwa wote’ (service to all).” p 10, *NARC Bulletin*, December 2002.
- 5 *Modules for a Training Curriculum on Community-based Policing in Kenya, Volume 1*, February 2004, p 5.
- 6 One government official interviewed commented how the joint training “helped change attitudes and develop partnerships.” Interview, September 2001.
- 7 The Governance, Justice, Law and Order programme is led by the Kenya Government through the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and seeks to implement far-reaching reforms in the public sector. Its hallmark is the sector-wide approach that aims to support better governance, justice, law and order. In total, 32 government institutions and ministries are involved in this programme. Civil society also participates in different thematic groups of the programme. It is jointly funded by the Government of Kenya and 17 international development partners.
- 8 In an advertisement placed by the Kenya Police in Sunday Nation newspaper in March 2005, it was stated that, “The overall goal for the Kenya Police during the planning period is to create a modern, efficient and effective Police Service that is responsive to the needs and expectations of Kenyans... The Kenya Police Force has in the past practised regime policing that appeared to focus substantial energy on sustaining the power of the political elite. It must now practice democratic policing by focusing its efforts on providing service to the Kenyan people through the promotion of the respect for the rule of law and human rights.” ‘The Kenya Police Strategic Plan 2004–2008’, *Sunday Nation*, 7 March 2005.
- 9 The Kenya police is currently developing a new five year Strategic Plan running from 2008–2013.
- 10 *Administration Police Strategic Plan 2004–2009*, p 11.
- 11 A company dedicated to lighting up streets as a strategy of curbing crime.
- 12 The ALRMP is a government run project to enhance food security and manage resources among communities living in arid and semi arid areas.
- 13 The scale of the challenge of increasing public trust in the police was clear to see at the launch of the Kenya Police strategic plan and CBP in April 2005. “Police lorries made rounds in the neighbourhood offering free transport to the venue. The officers were quite diplomatic as they would first greet those walking to the venue before offering them a lift in the new spirit of partnership between the police and public. But at first, nobody was willing to board the police vehicles and the officers had to convince the wananchi [people] that they were not being arrested. Reluctantly, the people took the ‘risk’ and accepted the free ride from the police. On the way, some pedestrians fled on seeing the police lorries filled to capacity thinking that there was a police crackdown.” *Sunday Nation*, ‘Policing a willing community’, 1 May 2005.
- 14 Interview, September 2005.

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## Profiles of implementing organisations

**PeaceNet** Peace and Development Network (PeaceNet-Trust) is a national network of NGOs, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations and individuals working in the areas of peacebuilding and conflict management and security sector development in Kenya.

Since 1992, the network has remained committed to its mission of sustaining a broad-based coalition of peace workers across Kenya. The network has active co-ordinating committees in eleven regions of Kenya, a national co-ordinators' forum, a national secretariat, a board of trustees and a members' consultative forum.

PeaceNet-Trust works to promote and encourage resource sharing and volunteering among agencies and people committed to establishing peace and security as a basis for development. The network's national strategy focuses on strengthening government-civil society partnership institutions and enhancing civil society capacity for effective participation in the Kenya's security sector development.

**Saferworld** Saferworld is an independent organisation that works to prevent armed violence and create safer communities in which people can lead peaceful and rewarding lives. It aims to empower local partners with the skills to become more effective and sustainable. Saferworld develops and carries out programmes with a range of governments and international, regional, national and local organisations. Through a combination of research, advocacy and training, Saferworld works to develop integrated security sector reform and access to justice strategies that are able to enhance safety and security for local communities, as one of its core activities. The organisation has programmes in Africa, Europe and South Asia.

For more information about Saferworld and its activities, visit [www.saferworld.org.uk](http://www.saferworld.org.uk).

Across the world, there is increasing recognition that without security there can be no development. As one of the main providers of security, the police play a pivotal role in creating the conditions in which development can take place.

This report describes the experience and lessons learned from implementing an innovative and democratic style of policing in Kenya called community-based policing which brings together the police, civil society and communities to find local solutions to community safety concerns. By improving relations between the police and local communities community-based policing is helping to reduce crime and make communities in Kenya safer.

This report is designed to deepen understanding of the community-based policing approach and to provide guidance as to how it can be undertaken.



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