

INVESTIGATION INTO THE PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNITY POLICE FORUMS IN CRIME PREVENTION IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

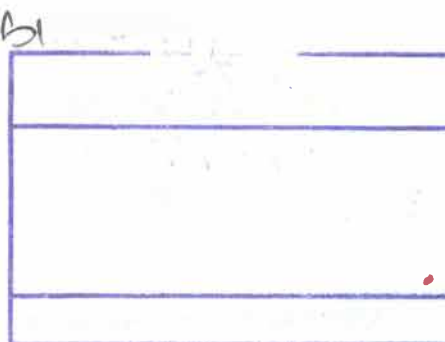


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**STUDY ON THREE POLICE AREAS OF THE NORTH WEST NAMELY
MOLOPO, MARICO AND MOOIRIVER**

BY



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**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE – MASTERS IN PEACE
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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH WEST**

DECLARATION

I, Sylvia Mmamohapi Pheto Hereby declare that the dissertation entitled,

INVESTIGATION INTO THE PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNITY POLICE FORUMS IN CRIME PREVENTION IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Is my own work in design and has never been previously submitted by me for any degree at this institution or any other university and that all the sources contained therein have been acknowledged by means of complete reference.



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SYLIVA MMAMOHAPI PHETO

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I would also like to unreservedly thank my Supervisor Professor Kaya for the guidance and patience he had when assisting me with this study. Lastly I thank God for making everything possible for the successful completion of this project.

ABSTRACT

The study made an investigation into the participation of the Community Police Forums in the North West Province with special reference to the three Police areas in the North West Province, namely, Molopo, Marico and Mooiriver. The study found out that the Community Police Forums are established in all the stations in the North West Province.

Their level of effectiveness differed due to lack of commitment by the communities, shortage of resources in their respective police stations to support them, insufficient funding for their projects and programmes, and lack of education and awareness to communities and police officers that would solicit support to the structures. These factors complicated the task of developing a shared vision of democratic community policing.

The study recommends; first, the need to promote awareness of CPFs and their role. This is an integral part of promoting peace building for community sustainable development in the province. Second, there is a need to promote effective partnership between community and police, which should include mutual trust, and information sharing between community members and the police.

Lastly, is the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation of the Community Police Forums that will ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the structures in the Province.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In 1996, the South African government adopted the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), which allows for organs of civil society to work with government to reduce crime. This was after the government was aware that there is a gap between the communities and the South African Police Service (SAPS) in terms of crime prevention in South Africa. South Africa comes from the apartheid regime where police officers were used by government to oppress and torture black people. The apartheid Government was using police force to push its political agenda of oppressing the designated groups. (Oppler,1997).

The police are repeatedly criticized by both black and white communities for their failure to contain ordinary common law crime in the country. A number of judges have recently chastised the police regarding the quality and approach to investigations – many of them involving murder.

In dealing with all these criticisms, the South African Police Service has been unable to account for its inability to resolve crime, in the light of its own previous claims of effectivity and invincibility. (Hayson,1995).

Community Policing is a philosophy enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) and the South African Police Service Act, 1995 (Act 68 of 1995) aimed at establishing the Community Police Forums and Boards with the objective of promoting communication and cooperation between the South African Police Services and communities, and to improve transparency and service delivery in the South African Police Service.

On top of the legislations that establishes the Community Police Forums, the Department of Safety and Liaison is mandated by the South African Constitution to establish, monitor and evaluate these structures.

The Department of Safety and Liaison has the obligation to formulate the regulations that provides for matters relating to the establishment and functioning of the Community Police Forums and Boards in order to enhance the partnership and joint problem solving between communities and the South African Police Service. (White Paper Safety and Security, 1998).

This philosophy is not new but grounded in the original principles of modern policing. Community Policing is not “soft” policing. It has now been recognized as more effective because it understands that it is not the police alone who combat and prevent crime.

It is the community who are largely responsible for criminal prosecutions. They lay charges, make statements, testify in court, and assist the police in the performance of their functions. Without this cooperation no police force can discharge its duties. There must be increased local community influence and control over policing priorities and practices. (Mzamane,1994).

According to Pelsier (2002), Crime Prevention seems to be a simple concept. But if one has to ask a police officer, lawyer, social worker or development activist what it means and how it's done, one is likely to get as many different answers as the people one asked. The 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security defines crime prevention as “*all activities, which reduce, deter, or prevent the occurrence of specific crimes.*” But what are these activities?

According to the White Paper, they could be the core business of the police, courts and prisons as well as the activities of other governmental and non-governmental role players. They may be responsible for reducing the socio-economic and environmental factors that influence people to commit crimes and become persistent offenders.

The problem still lies with the word “prevention.” To prevent something means having the ability to predict its occurrence and then to actively intervene to stop it from happening. As Paul Ekblom, a British policy analyst, puts it: “Crime Prevention is action prior to the criminal event that interrupts a chain of cause and effect which would otherwise have led to the event.”

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study was motivated by the following research questions

- What was the idea behind the formation of Community Police Forums in the North West Province?
- Who are the role players in the North West Province with regard to Crime Prevention?
- What procedures are involved in the establishment of Community Police Forums in the North West Province?
- What are the functions of the Community Police Forums in preventing crime in the North West Province?
- What is the relationship between the South African Police Service and the Community in the North West Province?
- What are the challenges facing the Community Police Forums in their responsibility to prevent crime?

1.3 Rationale of the Study

The community of South Africa in general, and the North West Province in particular are really concerned with the escalation of crime. The establishment of

the Community Police Forums is a way of having the communities owning the whole approach of crime prevention. The belief is that criminals are the people who live in the communities, brothers, sisters, parents, relatives and neighbors.

The idea is to get communities to identify the criminals in their own households and neighborhoods. This will ultimately force the criminals themselves to realize that they do not have a place in the society; if they are identified and arrested by people they live with.

The partnership will assist both communities and the police to build trust and raise awareness on crime prevention. This will eventually create a safe environment where the community report and prevent crime. The study will also help both the community and the police to identify the shortfalls in the process of crime prevention and creating a safe environment for the people of the North West.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The South African government has realized that not only the police can prevent crime, but also crime prevention needs a partnership approach. The focus in this study is on the evaluation of the participation and the impact that the Community Police Forums (CPFs) have made so far. It will also give the overview of the functionality and the establishment of the CPFs in the province.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The study examined the following specific aspects

- The idea behind the formation of the Community Police Forums in the North West Province.

- The role players in the North West Province with regard to Crime Prevention.
- The procedures involved in the establishment of the Community Police Forums in the North West Province.
- The functions of Community Police Forums in preventing crime in the North West Province.
- The relationship between the South African Police Service and the Community in the North West Province.
- The challenges facing the Community Policing Forums in their responsibility to prevent crime.

1.6 Literature Review

A comparative study was undertaken in terms of previous research done by different institution such as the Institute for Security Studies. Other books, Journals, papers and publication that are relevant to the study were also consulted to solicit the views of different writers.

According to Abbott (1996) Community participation is relevant in every sector of development. When it is practiced successfully it transforms programmes and provides the critical component, which can promote sustainable development.

In a world of rapid change, effective and meaningful community participation is a fundamental basis of security, either of the individual or of the group. A clear understanding of the nature of participation is central to the search for peace, social justice and democracy, hence the notion of

the criminal justice system within the context of the National Crime Prevention Strategy.

Furthermore Abbott maintains that, community participation is like any concept, which has strong social and political implications; therefore it is often convenient for those who interact with the process to interpret it in a way, which meets their own interests, as well as their own particular perceptions.

In this case, the Community Police Forums mobilize communities to participate in community projects such as "Project Nexus" which is facilitated by the Department of Safety and Security. The community ultimately run and owns the project to prevent crime.

In his opening address to Parliament on 25 June 1999, South Africa's new President committed the government to take measures to "*strengthen the Community Police Forums to improve their capacity to mobilize the people against crime and to improve co-operation between the people and the law enforcement agencies.*" This, he said, would be one of "*the hallmarks of the national offensive against crime and violence.*" (Mbeki, 1999).

President Mbeki's commitment to enhance the CPFs is not surprising. These structures exist at almost every police station in the country and are the most visible, if not the only, expression of South Africa's community policing policy. What is surprising is that Mbeki's statement appears to contradict the direction of the *White Paper on Safety and Security*, which explicitly provides for strengthening the capacity of elected local government to "supplement" the functions of the CPFs.

Pelser (1999) states that if the President's commitment to strengthen CPFs is seen as more than rhetoric, especially in the light of the country's

crime rates, then community policing has to be examined against the reality of the challenges that face it.

Community policing is not only implemented in South Africa, but in many parts on the world community policing exists. Warburton, (1998) states that crime is an issue of paramount social importance; one that directly or indirectly affects each and every member of the society.

The costs associated with crime are not merely financial. Emotional costs result when a criminal murders or severely injures an individual's family member or close friend, or when an offender is incarcerated, depriving his family of the emotional and/or financial support.

Public concern has increased over specific aspects of crime problem in recent years, namely domestic violence, drug related crime and violence, gang related crime and violence, juvenile crime, prison reform, and the role of television in producing violence.

He further says that Community Policing helps to build trust between the community and law enforcement, which in a crisis can help law enforcement deal more effectively with community concerns. This trust also helps law enforcement to develop knowledge of community and resident activity and can provide vital intelligence relating to potential terrorist actions.

He states that Community Policing encourages law enforcement officials to develop partnership with civic and community groups to help address community needs and to involve the public in problem-solving efforts.

Oppler (1997) says that the adoption of Community Policing as a philosophy is solemnly to bridge distrust and gaps so that instead of police and communities standing far apart as enemies, they could rally behind

government in its attempts to create a police service that would work hand-in hand with communities. This is true in that these fundamental principles operate to maintain repressive structures such as those of the police.

The whole idea of transforming the police service and reviewing the regulations for Community Police Forums is emanated from the fact that people distance themselves from police. Therefore in bringing all these fundamentals, i.e., service delivery by the police to the people, the police culture changed (Mzamane, 1994).

The Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (Act 200 of 1993) gave full mandate for the establishment of Community Police Forums to carry out the mandate of community policing. It provided broad framework that there shall be a CPF in each police station, and its duties would be to oversee and monitor policing in terms of promoting the relationship of the police and the community. The same Interim Constitution of Republic of South Africa, 1993, does not provide for the resource allocation, which the South African Police Service Act, 1995, outlines.

However, the review of such regulations would emanate from the police framework to assist in proper functioning. Further to this the Police and Evidence Act, 1984 (Act 90 of 1984) provided that “ *Arrangements shall be made in each policing area for obtaining the views for people in that area about matters concerning the policing of the area and for obtaining their cooperation with the police in preventing crime in the area.*”

Burger (2002) questioned the role of the police in preventing crime. He opened his discussion at a seminar at the Institute for Security Studies by quoting Sir Robert Peel, the founder of the London Metropolitan Police Service. Peel is famous for his, then revolutionary, contention that, “*the*

basic mission for which the police exist is the prevention of crime and disorder.” This assertion moved the police away from their traditional law enforcement role by placing in their hands the responsibility of proactively preventing crime before it happens.

In his talk, Burger (2002) challenged this notion in the context of today’s South Africa, suggesting that the skills for preventing crime are more likely to be found in other departments. In the end, Burger concluded that while a national center for crime prevention was necessary, it should ultimately be located outside the police.

Burger is not the first to dispute whether the police are the agency best suited for the task of crime prevention. Bayley (2000) also maintains that lines:

“The police do not prevent crime. This is one of the best-kept secrets of modern life. Experts know it, the police know it, but the public does not know it. Yet the police pretend that they are society’s best defense against crime and continually argue that if they are given more resources, especially personnel, they will be able to protect communities against crime. This is a myth.”

Unfortunately, the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is unequivocal about where responsibility for crime prevention lies. While is not mentioned in the mandates of any other department, the Constitution places crime prevention at the head of a list of four “objects” of the SAPS:

To prevent, combat, and investigate crime, to maintain public order, to protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property, and to uphold and enforce the law.

Subsequent policy documents issued by the Department of Safety and Security, on the other hand, quickly disavowed exclusive responsibility for

crime prevention. The 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy and the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security argue that preventing crime require the participation of a range of departments at all levels of government, as well as civil society.

Pelser (1999), states that the weaknesses in the SAPS community policing approach motivated the establishment of CPF. He feels that the people need to be involved not only in determining police priorities in their area, but also in identifying the crime prevention needs.

And because a range of economic, social and political factors affects crime levels, addressing the crime prevention needs would require a multi-disciplinary, integrated approach.

Ted Leggett (2003) in his paper "***What do the police do?***" indicates that in recent years the role of the police has focused on whether their job should be confined to law enforcement, or whether they have a role to play in preventing crime.

This debate has direct relevance for performance measurement, because the kinds of indicators used to measure the delivery of law enforcement services are very different from those that would be used to measure the prevention of crime.

He further says that for the South African Police Service (SAPS), as for many other police departments around the world, a central conflict lies in the fact that while they are legislatively charged with preventing crime, many analysts question whether they have the ability to do so.

1.7 Hypotheses

- Community Police Forums enhance the partnership between the South African Police Service and the community of the North West against crime.
- In the North West Province, the role players in crime prevention are the members of SAPS, the Department of Safety and Liaison in the province, the Independent Complaints Directorate in the North West Province, members of the CPFs, Government Departments and the Civil Society at large.
- The Community Police Forums are established at three levels in the province, at Station level by the Station Commissioners, at Area level by Area Commissioners and at Provincial level by Provincial Commissioner with the community through consultative meetings.
- The Community Policing Forums promote police accountability to the communities and cooperation of communities with police service.
- The relationship between the Community and SAPS in the North West tends to be based on trust and support that the communities give to the CPFs.
- The challenges facing the CPFs in their responsibility to prevent crime include lack of adequate resources and the criminal justice system.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study will provide policy makers with information to take informed decisions when developing strategies for community policing in the

province and other parts of the country. It also forms the basis for early warning systems for police action in cooperation with local communities.

Moreover, the study provides information for community capacity building and awareness of the importance of community policing and police-community relationship. It provides readers more especially peace studies students with information to advance their knowledge of the role of community policing structures in the community with regard to crime prevention.

1.9 Methodology

This was a survey of the participation of the Community Police Forums in crime prevention in the North West Province.

Qualitative research methods such as key informants, review of available literature and personal observation was the core of the data collection methods. The study was conducted in the three police areas of the North West Province namely, Molopo, Marico and Moiriver. The interviews were conducted with both men and women to solicit the views on gender perspective.

1.9.1 Subjects

The following constituted the sources of information for the study:

1. Key persons
 - Members of South African Police Service
 - Members of the CPFs in the province
2. Stratified random sample of community members on the basis of gender. Fifteen men and fifteen women from the three areas were interviewed in this case.

3. Secondary sources comprised of journals, research documents, Internet, government publications, policy documents and reports from SAPS and Department of Safety and Liaison.

1.9.2 Method of data collection

The semi-structured interviews were done with the key persons and a stratified random sample of community members on the basis of gender. Several relevant books and resource materials with relevant information were also used.

1.9.3 Data analysis

Since most of the field data contents (attitudes, opinions, etc,) of respondents were qualitative, analysis was used to analyze data. This was done in relation to the research questions and objectives of the study.

1.9.4 Ethical considerations

Social research of any kind is obviously a complex activity. It is carried out within a variety of cultural, legal, economic, and political environments, which are bound to influence the research, its scope and its focus. The Individuals who supply the information that forms the basis of this research have a legitimate concern with the uses to which that information is put and expect a strict adherence to undertakings of confidentiality given at the time of data collection.

The researcher was well aware that the breaches to this could cause serious limitations in the ability of other future researchers as well as access to statistical data collection by others. Therefore the researcher remained sensitive to and cognizant of the social and racial differences of the subjects with the view to consider conflicting interests whenever they

arise. As such a research should avoided intrusion into the lives of the individuals or community studied.

1.9.5 Limitations of the Study

- Some books have information on the selected CPF functionality with very little information about the North West Province.
- Some materials provide differing information that causes confusion to the researcher, especially when there is no other way of verifying the information.

1.9.6 Organization of the Final Report

Chapter One provides introduction, which includes the background, aims, objectives, and methodology of the study.

Chapter Two outlines the idea behind the formation of the Community Police Forums in the North West Province.

Chapter Three shows the role players in the North West Province with regard to Crime Prevention.

Chapter Four discusses the procedures involved in the establishment of the Community Police Forums in the Province.

Chapter Five shows the functions of the Community Police Forums in preventing Crime in the North West Province.

Chapter Six outlines the relationship between the South African Police Service and the Community.

Chapter Seven examines the Challenges facing the CPFs in their responsibility to prevent crime.

Chapter Nine provides the conclusion and recommendations to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

THE IDEA BEHIND THE FORMATION OF THE COMMUNITY POLICE FORUMS IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

It is very important to examine the idea behind the formation of the Community Police Forums in the North West Province. North West Province is one of South Africa's most rural Provinces, where crime is said to be caused by factors such as poverty and underdevelopment.

The aim of this chapter is to establish how it happened for the North West Province and other provinces to have the Community Policing Forums. Whose idea was it, how it all started and how it came to be accepted by both police and communities. It looks at the establishment of community policing in South Africa, pre-legislative phase of the forums, commencement of the establishment of the forums in different areas and the Legislative framework and the first Community Policing Forums projects in the province.

2.1 Tracing the development of Community Policing in South Africa

South Africa's transition to democracy required a radical transformation of all state institutions. In restructuring the police service, Community policing was adopted as a new set of ethos that form the basis for policing in post-apartheid South Africa. This vision was to be introduced by setting up Community Police Forums at police stations throughout the country.

The implementation of community policing, through Community Police Forums, has brought to bear the complexity, dynamics and diversity of this process and of social and political relationships at both provincial and local levels, particularly in the North West Province. (Rakgodi, 1995).

The mammoth task undertaken to establish Community Police Forums at each station, has resulted in the re-conceptualization and reorganization of governance at the provincial and local level. Community Policing seeks to protect the fundamental human rights of all South African Citizens rather than to enforce a particular political ideology, as it had been the case with the successive apartheid regimes.

The primary objective of enforcing law and order has been replaced by the provision of safety and security to all communities that the South African Police Services (SAPS) serve. This represents a fundamental shift in policing in South Africa. However, the maintenance of law and order still remains a crucial function of the police.

According to Brown (1992), Community Policing should be seen as a working partnership between the police and the communities to prevent crime, arrest offenders, find solutions to recurring problems and to enhance the quality of life of the community. This partnership should ensure that the lives and properties of all citizens are protected; that the dignity of each individual is respected; and that the police service is rendered with courtesy.

Through this positive working relationship, the police will come into closer, more positive contact with the community and thus foster effective communication with the entire community it serves. The close cooperation between the police and the community has a positive spin-off in that it also fosters police professionalism and police accountability to the community being served.

Further more it should also be seen as a cooperative effort involving all interested and affected stakeholder groups from the communities, police, government and civil society. The community and the police exist in a broader social context and often come into contact with a variety of role players, interest groups, especially the government and civil society. The partnership between the

police and the community plays itself out in the community police forum, which are enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. (Rakgoadi, 1995)

2.2 Pre-Legislation Phase of Community Policing in South Africa

It was evident that South Africa's political transformation took place by means of a negotiated settlement, which resulted in agreements by which all the former policemen and women, good and bad, of the apartheid regime were entitled to be part of the new South African Police Service (SAPS).

The fact that community policing was introduced almost simultaneously with the advent of democratic rule gave it an added significance seeing that community policing was seen by local communities to be a style of policing that would replace authoritarian policing. It was also implied that local civilian participation in the control of the police was to be high, given the rhetoric of politicians during the pre-election period.

According to Khuzwayo 1998, from 1990 onwards, a significant concern of the government-in-waiting was that the security forces could stage a coup if the new democratic government won by a significant majority in the 1994 elections. It was also considered important to reduce the power of the security police by the time of the installation of the democratic government. It was therefore considered important that a form of civilian oversight be installed over the police and, until the Secretariat for Safety and Security became that structure in 1996, the Ministerial Advisory Group played that role from 1994 onwards.

It had limited capacity to effect wide-scale policy changes and as a consequence the idea of community policing remained relatively undefined until 1994 when the interim constitution established some broad parameters for it. However, the then South African Police had established a community policing division in 1993 already and the period from the beginning of 1993 to the end of 1994 became

one in which competing images of community policing were brought into the nascent community policing forums.

From a police point of view, community policing took on a post-cold war intelligence gathering character in which the community would hopefully become the “eyes and ears” of the police. After all the police had always been the most tangible and visible form of the state in poor communities, and also the most hated and mistrusted form of the state.

The agenda of these communities was therefore to reverse the imbalance of power the police had over them, and bring the police to be accountable to their needs. The stage was thus set in those early days for protracted power battles in the new Community Police Forums.

The first and most celebrated CPF was formed in Manenberg, Cape Town, a working class “Coloured” township in the classic apartheid style; Low-cost high-density state housing rented to the citizens, high crime levels, vicious street gangs, minimal civic amenities, dumping grounds for the urban labour force and reservoir for the reserve labour pool. Yet there was a high level of civic consciousness and a preparedness to become involved in reducing the crime and victimization levels. (Khuzwayo, 1998)

The battles in the CPF in Manenberg, which lasted for more than a year, revolving around a number of important issues: who chairs the meeting? Who sets the agenda? who should be represented in the forum (political parties, individuals or organizations only?), what constitutes representivity of all interest groups in the community?.

In this early phase, the police were adamant that they should control the whole process, that the community should automatically forgive and forget the atrocities of the past, and turn a new page as it were. Communities on the other hand were determined to let the police know about their past failings, the atrocities, the

cover-ups, and fizzled-out investigations of abusive policemen, the torture of political detainees (Foster and Davis, 1987) and non-political suspects (Ferandez, 1990).

At some stage the mini Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) were lived out at police stations, and this resulted in policemen being transferred to other stations where their past was not known or not as contentious.

The community at this stage wanted to literally and figuratively penetrate the space of the hated police agency, in a sense to tame and shame them and make them accountable to the needs of the community.

The message was essentially that we, the community, want you, the police, to act in accordance with our priorities and in accordance with the law. Communities also attempted to use some form of censure of the police, whom they considered had performed poorly, or were not listening to the needs of the communities. (Scharf, 2000).

2.3 Commencement of the Establishment

The second stage in the idea of establishment of Community policing was one that focused on the communities expressing their priorities to the police. This phase took place in many stations before the official policy on community policing had been developed. This means that neither the police nor the community members had been trained in community policing issues and the competing visions had to be brought to the battleground called the Community Policing Forum.

According to Scharf, 1997, at this stage police themselves realized the need to have CPFs, as most witnesses and victims of crime did not want to come out. SAPS had a huge task of making awareness of the importance to report crime. Once the CPFs started assisting police with most common work such as taking

statements, and assisting the domestic violence victims, the working relationship developed with the police. Bit by bit the communities understood the limitations under which police usually worked.

That was crucial turning point, when the constant barrage of criticism changed to a willingness to help create the conditions which would supposedly enable the police to do their jobs better. This was taken to an extreme in Hartebeesport; where the farming community around Hartebeesport provided the police with everything they lacked to be effective and efficient, vehicles, bulletproof vests, two-way radios.

This really assisted because the police around that area ended up with complacent rather than angry and demoralized cops. In other stations the communities started raising funds for the police, and in poor communities that translated into more volunteer help rather than funding. (Nexus evaluation report, 2001).

2.4 Legislative framework and first community policing projects

In 1994, the Interim Constitution was fairly explicit about what structures should be erected, and obliged each police station to create a broadly representative forum in which it will interact with communities about their safety needs and concerns. This concept was adopted differently by different provinces.

Most stations in the country were faced with a confusing barrage of new laws without receiving training as to how to implement the new procedures. Whether as a result of the policing vacuum or independent of it, the crime rate in the country continued to rise dramatically.

The police had initially taken the view that Community Policing was a communication and liaison strategy only. Consequently, only the station commissioner and the community policing officers considered themselves to be

bound by it. There is no doubt that, while this was the phase of the blooming of community policing forums it was contained the seeds of their decline.

Communities were mobilized and informed about the benefits of firstly holding the police accountable, and secondly, getting the police to live up to their priorities set by their local communities. Expectations for a better, less crime-intensive future were high. (Nina, 2000).

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE PLAYERS IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE WITH REGARD TO CRIME PREVENTION

The Constitution of South Africa has provided a basis framework on which community policing could take off. The non-governmental organizations have played and still continue to play a crucial and indispensable role in the setting up of CPFs as a mechanism through which community policing can be implemented at a local level.

The role of civil society in the process of facilitating the establishment of CPF should be seen against the background of its protracted involvement with communities through various projects and programmes that, in the main sought to empower the disadvantaged communities. They are sensitive to local conditions and culture. In the North West Province, the communities do not have institutional (organizational) capacity to effectively support community outreach projects. Therefore, the role of non-governmental organizations goes far beyond the mere establishment of community police forums.

The Provincial government, particularly the MEC for Safety and Liaison in the Province, has the responsibility of ensuring that the community police forums are established in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Moreover, the MEC, together with the Provincial Commissioner of the SAPS in the Province, has the task of ensuring that community police forums are functioning effectively and efficiently and that those forums are sustained. This responsibility brings the relevant MEC into direct contact with NGOs, which could or have undertaken to facilitate the process of establishing CPFs.

The local government with its local forums also played an important role in the establishment of the CPFs. However currently the main point of contention and intense debate is the redefinition of boundaries.

The aim of this chapter is to identify the role players in the North West with regard to Crime Prevention.

3.1 CIVIL SOCIETY AS A ROLE PLAYER

The Constitution, through its provisions on community policing, ensures community participation in matters pertaining to policing. For the community policing forums to function effectively, the community needs to be empowered to be able to participate effectively in these forums.

The civil society plays a significant role in the empowerment of both the community and the police, through the CPFs, by providing resources such as skills and information, conflict management and resolution, mediation and facilitation skills are, inter alias, of great importance to the survival of most CPFs.

3.1.1 Political Parties

In other Provinces such as Gauteng, organizations were requested to send two representatives who will sit in the forum meetings once a month. It turned out that some organizations were "over-represented." Organizations such as African National Congress (ANC) have different structures such as the youth, women's leagues etc.

These various structures sought representation as entities which have their own programmes and which represented important constituencies. Moreover, the ANC's alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and support for the South African National Civic Association (SANCO) complicated the situation even further, because some organizations were concerned that members of the SACP and SANCO were in most instances also members of the ANC. (Swilling, 1994).

Given the above scenario, while it is important to have all organizations represented, we should also understand that people would always have invested interest on other matters. Some may feel that if there are more members of the certain political parties then they are just members to rubber-stamp the already taken decision.

Some people may just have a negative attitude towards the idea mainly because they do not support a certain party, therefore they would like as much as possible not to support the idea. This is a serious issue because it goes as far as creating conflicting groups within the society. Some people may just decide to turn into criminals just to make a point that the CPF thing can never work in their society.

Some members of CPFs would hijack the process by making it a political platform to address the community on political interests and aims. In such situations, the CPFs could become vulnerable and even collapse due to conflicting interests of the society. (Pakiso Ragoadi, 1995).

3.1.2 Faith Based Organizations

The North West Council of Churches is encouraging partnership in faith and action with churches in the North West Province, to promote justice and peace. It is true that CPFs have been successful in some places and unsuccessful in others. In a workshops hosted by the Department of Safety and Liaison in March 2003, in Marico, Molopo and Mooiriver areas, obstacles hampering effective community policing were raised. These included lack of knowledge and training about CPFs in the community, poor representation by the civil society, police involvement in crime, the involvement of known criminals in some CPFs etc.

A deep mistrust between the communities and police in the North West was fostered under different political affiliations and race. Church involvement in local dispute resolution committees has been very successful in a number of communities in the North West Province. (Mashiyane, 1998).

For instance in one community in the North West, where the involvement of church leaders has played a critical role in shaping a successful CPF is Nierdverdiend in Marico Area. When the CPF was first started in 1997, the police were only able to investigate about 13% of crimes in the area effectively. Now the police are able to investigate about 60% of crimes effectively. This is largely due to a relationship of trust that has been built between the community of Nierdverdiend and police.

The Chairperson of the CPF is a reverend of the Uniting Reformed Church. The Chairperson has been able to influence other clergy in the community to take part in the CPF and to let them talk about it in their small congregations. This has helped to strengthen the community trust in the entire process. (Nexus Report, 2001).

The other church involvement in the CPF has been witnessed in Umbilo CPF, serving an inner city suburb of Durban, which is a different example of how projects can be supported with the assistance of permanent church structures. The Chairperson of Umbilo CPF approached the local Ministers' Fellowship to participate in the CPF.

A representative was appointed which reported back to the Ministers' Fellowship to organize counseling for victims of violence. The project has been underway since January 1998. The plan calls for engaging professional therapists to do an initial consultation with the victim. Thereafter a minister from the victim's denomination begins counseling process. This model is very important because it shows what kind of different and successful intervention is possible with church involvement. (Khuzwayo, 1998).

The role of churches in establishment and support of the CPF can again be useful in the announcements of community meetings in church. What the church

has as a major resource is its access to ordinary people. If this institution does not support the concept of community policing it may not be a success.

If the society has to raise conscientious young people who would assist in creating safe communities, the church would be the one most committed to the task. It would encourage homes and families that support these young people to take ownership of crime prevention and partnership with police in crime prevention.

The function of the police of creating a crimeless society would never be achieved by the sole action of law enforcement. The church itself has a significant function to fight for a just and human society. This means that the church should ensure that the police protect and serve the most vulnerable in society. This ethos should guide the police in all its their work, their priorities and how they discharge their responsibilities. (Mashiyane, 1998).

3.1.3 Youth Organizations and Cultural Groups

In the North West unemployment rate is very high. Most youth complete school and are left jobless. Most of them join the CPF with the aim of keeping themselves busy, gaining some empowerment on the other hand. Most youth clubs encourage their members to be part of the CPF so that they assist in crime prevention.

In the Eastern part of the North West most youth are involved in the CPF. They have started football teams in order to keep their peers off the streets. The local CPF is monitoring this initiative. One of their projects in schools is a campaign to make sure that the Adopt-a-cop Project driven by the Department of Education and SAPS is implemented in schools in the vicinity. They have invited youth from other organizations to be part of their visit in schools.

While they talk to children about crime prevention, some youth from different churches will be talking about religious issues, and some youth from youth commission will be talking about basic morale and good behaviour of children.

These meetings are held on quarterly basis. Youth in the Tlhabane joined the CPFs to address and support the police to deal with specific problems of youth in the area. They organized youth in the area to awareness on danger of illegal firearms. Schools such as Reatile Middle School in Tlhabane were used in the campaign.

The CPF raised the funds with business people to fence the school surroundings for "*Firearm Free Zone*" Project. In that campaign that included the school, parents, community and SAPS, the safety team was formed and mandated to draft a Reatile Middle School: Firearm Free Zone Policy. (CPF Monitoring Report, 2001).

3.1.4 Traditional leadership

North West Province is mostly rural. Most areas are still under traditional authority leadership. The participation of traditional authority has brought a success in most CPFs. The traditional leadership knows their jurisdiction very well. They even go to extent of knowing the labels of the livestock in the whole village. In most instances of stock-theft the CPFs have played a major role in assisted police to find the stolen livestock.

A traditional authority such as the Bahurutshe tribal Offices in Lehurutshe has established a partnership with the police to protect their stock. They patrol the area at night, especially areas that are along the Botswana Border where stock-theft is rife. Immediately they come across the cattle rooming in an open grazing land, they tell from the label whether the cattle belong to their tribe or to farmers in Botswana. The partnership has even extended to the Botswana Police and the neighboring Botswana villages.

In areas such as the Phokeng in Rustenburg, the tribal Office is also represented in the CPF. There are projects that are run with funds from Bafokeng Tribal authority. Phokeng Police Station is situated around the mining areas of Bafokeng Platinum mines.

Priority cases around that area includes the illegal immigrants, domestic violence from informal settlements, robber and assaults. What the CPFs have done to assist the police to identify illegal immigrants is that they have started an Adopt-a-neighbor Project. Where members of the community are encouraged to know their neighbors well, so that in case anything happens in that family the neighbor knows whom to call.

Each and every household had to register in the tribal offices with all proof of citizenship. The major advantage of this project from the point of view of police is that it made it very easy for them to identify illegal immigrants.

Most of the neighbors were from neighboring countries with no legal documents. The CPFs explained the projects to the community to sensitize them that most of the robberies and theft that took place in the area, the culprits were not arrested because their finger prints were not identified by the Home Affairs Department, which gave them a suspicion that the culprits may not be South Africans.

Since the running of the project, the crime went down in the area, and the community is working very cooperatively with the police and the CPF in the area. Most cases are reported at the police station even in the tribal office.

3.1.5 Business Organizations.

Business Organizations are other sectors that support the CPFs in the North West. After 1994, in the Eastern Part and South of the North West, there was taxi violence. Taxi owners felt that Police were not doing enough to deal with crime

and conflicts in the taxi industries. There were always riots that left many innocent passengers dead.

The Department of Transport in the Province initiated that all Taxi Owners should affiliate to Taxi associations to control the taxi violence. This did not assist because of the tensions that already existed and the mistrust that was there, instead that caused more violence against the taxi organizations themselves.

Some Taxi Organizations preferred to appoint the vigilante organizations that offer their crime-fighting services for a fee such as Mapogo a Mathamaga (Minnaar, 1999). These vigilante organizations used extra legal methods of punishment in a context in which the law is seen to be too liberal and the state too weak (Shaw, 1996).

Participation of the business organizations in the CPF has really assisted the communities in the sense that the community themselves have the opportunity to relate with the Organizations and police without blaming each other. The Businesses in the vicinity as part of the CPF they even volunteer their services to the Forum in the form of money. For instance in Stations such as Tlhabane, Rustenburg, Phokeng in the Marico Area, CPFs initiated a project "Anti-Stolen Goods" project.

The purpose was to inform and educate communities on the danger of buying the stolen goods and destroying the market. The community members reported people who went from house to house selling stolen goods and goods that were not new. This project reduced the level of house breakings and theft in the area.

3.2 GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

3.3.1 Department of Social Services, Arts, Culture and Sports

This department has a long relationship with the CPF in the province. In most stations there are trauma centers for the victims of domestic violence. Most trauma centers make use of readily available counsellors and social workers from the Department of Social Service. This partnership has extended further to the establishment of Criminal Justice Clusters.

Most professionals register with the CPFs but because of the nature of their work do not have time to attend to activities of the CPF, but they try by all means to give support to those structures. When CPFs visit schools in their campaigns, they always invite the social workers to provide lessons and counseling to affected children. They also encourage children to ensure that they are registered for grants.

3.2.2 Department of Safety and Liaison

The Provincial government, particularly the MEC for Safety and Security, has the responsibility of ensuring that the community police forums are established in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Moreover, the MEC is bound by the constitution to ensure the establishment of the CPFs. In most cases, the MEC would sanction and/or commission a consortium of NGOs to conduct research on the prospects of community policing and/or to facilitate the process of establishment of the CPFs.

This Department is basically overseeing the existence and performance of the CPF in the Province. Monitoring of the CPF in all stations is done by the Department of Safety and Liaison.

3.2.3 The Department of Local Government

All local government associations are represented in the Provincial Community Forum Boards. The District Municipalities are represented in all the Area Community Police Forums within the jurisdiction of that District Municipality. The local municipalities are represented on community police forums and have ex officio status.

In some local government structures, the debates and developments in local government affects the functionality of community police forums at a local level. Unfortunately with other forums this becomes an avenue where tensions with local government manifest because some of the stakeholders groups, especially political parties, in CPFs contest the local government elections. The CPFs has become prone to abuse in the process leading to the local government elections.

In some stations the CPFs are led by the Councilors whom the community know very well. The relationship is good and encouraging for the community to report to the councilor their problems. In areas where the Councilor works as a Chairperson for Public Safety in the local council, communication and relationships are very good down to the community level. In such cases it has always been easier for the CPFs to address not only the crime in the area even to suggest to the council on dealing with some factors that causes or promote crime in the area, such as existence of local lights, abolishment of non-utilized building that serves as havens for criminals etc.

3.2.4 Department of Education

Schools have played the major role in the establishment of the CPFs and their functioning. Schools in the North West has worked hand in hand with the CPF to eradicate drugs and substance abuse in schools, Usage of firearms and other harmful tools by learners in schools. Schools allowed members of the CPFs and Police members to lecture children in schools regarding alcohol and drug abuse

and the possession of unlawful firearms in school premises. These lectures created awareness of unlawful substances and dangerous weapons in the surroundings.

The Department of Education also has a partnership with SAPS where the school adopts a cop. The police officer goes to the school and discuss with the schools teachers and learners about how he/she intends to assist them at school as a way of crime prevention.

He/She holds lectures with the children and they get used to him. The intension is not only crime prevention but also to bring police closer to the community, starting with the kids at school. If the cop develops a relationship with school kids they end up not taking him/her as a cop but as one of helpful member of community that supports the school.

In Letlhabile CPF organized "School Sports Against Crime" Project. The local schools got into the competition of sports and the best school won a rotating trophy for the best school in sports but with the above theme. The Department has worked hand in hand with SAPS to implement Adopt-a-cop Project in schools. Most schools in the North West have adopted the cops.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROCEDURES INVOLVED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNITY POLICE FORUMS IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, provides for accountability of the South African Police Service to the communities they serve. The South African Police Service Act, Act 68 of 1995 provides for the establishment of the Community Police Forums and Boards with the objective of promoting communication and co-operation between the South African Police Services (SAPS) and communities, and to improve transparency and service delivery in the South African Police Services.

The aim of this chapter is to show the procedures involved in establishing the CPFs in the Province at three different levels. Section 22(1) of the South African Police Service Act makes provision for the establishment of forums at every police station. There is the station level CPF, the Area Community Police Board operating at Area level Board, and the Provincial Community Police Board that operates at Provincial level. According to the Regulations for Community Police Forums and Board, 2002 establishment of the CPF is as follows:

4.1 Establishment of a Community Police Forum

- After proper and effective consultation with the Area Commissioner and the mayor of the local municipality, a station commissioner shall take all reasonable steps to establish a Community Police Forum, which is broadly representative of the community in the station area under his or her jurisdiction.
- The station commissioner identifies community based organizations, institutions and interested individuals in the station area under his/her jurisdiction; determine a suitable date, time and venue for an inaugural

meeting of all interested persons and groups to establish a Community Police Forum.

- He/She must take reasonable steps to make the date, time and venue of the inaugural meeting with the general public in the station area.
- During the inaugural meeting, the station commissioner must explain to the public the objectives of a Community Police Forum. He/She must provide the Community Police Forum Constitutional Framework and invite nominations of persons from all parties identified as representatives of different groups to establish a Community Police Forum. In that meeting Executive Committee should be elected.
- The newly established CPF should apply to the MEC for Safety and Liaison for recognition and registration of the Forum, within 14 days after the establishment of the Forum. The MEC for Safety and Liaison shall confirm the recognition and registration within 30 days of submission to her.
- If the community is too broad, with many villages and informal settlements, the need for sub-forums would be assessed and they will be established by the CPF. The Sub-forums should be accountable to the CPF.

4.2 Establishment of an Area Community Police Board

- After the establishment of the CPFs in at least two thirds of the number of stations in the area of jurisdiction of an area commissioner, such area commissioner should take all reasonable steps to establish an Area Community Police Board.

- Area Commissioner should in conjunction with the relevant district municipality, chairperson and one other member of every Community Police Forum established meet at the meeting determined by the Area Commissioner, with the purpose to establish an Area Community Police Board for that area.
- During the meeting the Area Commissioner should explain to attendants the objectives of an Area Community Police Board. He/She must provide Area Community Police Board Constitutional Framework, and convene elections of office bearers in accordance with the Constitutional Framework.
- If it happens that the executive member of the CPF is elected to the Area Community Police Board Executive, such person should relinquish their office at the CPF. Area Board Executive members should be ex officio members of all CPFs in their area.
- The newly established Area Community Police Board should within 14 days of establishment, apply to the MEC for Safety and Liaison for recognition and registration. The MEC should confirm the recognition and the registration within 30 days of submission to her.

4.3 Establishment of a Provincial Community Police Board

- After the establishment of the Area Community Police Boards in at least two thirds of the areas in the province.
- Provincial Commissioner should in consultation with the MEC, invite a minimum of three to seven members of the Executive committee of every area Board in the province, relevant representative from local government association, a representative from the Provincial House of

Traditional leaders, where applicable to a meeting, with the purpose of establishing a Provincial Community Police Board for the province.

- During the meeting the Provincial Commissioner should explain to attendants the objectives of Provincial Community Police Board. He must provide Provincial Community Police Board Constitutional Framework, and convene elections of office bearers in accordance with the Constitutional Framework.
- If it happens that the executive member of the Area Community Police Board is elected to the Provincial Community Police Board Executive, such person should relinquish their office at the Area Community Police Board.
- The newly established Provincial Community Police Board should within 14 days of establishment, apply to the MEC for Safety and Liaison for recognition and registration. The MEC should confirm the recognition and the registration within 30 days of submission to her.

All persons who live or work in the station area may participate in the activities and attend annual and general meetings of the CPF. Membership of the forum is open to all bona fide community based organizations, faith-based organizations, Non Governmental Organizations, formal and informal business organizations, and other social organizations which serve the community.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNITY POLICE FORUMS IN CRIME PREVENTION IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

The CPFs are required by the Regulations to prepare Community Safety Plan for the station area in respect of which it was established before the end of financial year and be submitted to the relevant Area Community Police Board. When developing the plan, the station commissioner and Area Commissioner provides relevant information and expertise at their disposal for the development of these plans.

The CPF has to consider the size of their jurisdiction, the crime patterns in their area and available resources that are available in their area. The CPFs' projects and programmes are funded; the plan should indicate who and how will the programmes and projects be funded. It will also indicate how they will promote the achievement of the objectives of the CPF.

The aim of this chapter is to outline the functions of the Community Policing Forums in crime prevention in the North West Province.

5.1 Promotion of accountability of the service to local communities and cooperation of communities with the service.

The objective of the CPF is to promote cooperation between the community and the police in fulfilling the needs of the community regarding policing. Partnerships between police and the communities they serve have transformed the fight against crime across the North West. The CPFs have been set up in almost every station. Some forums are more successful than others, but where both sides have bought into the partnership and brought energy and commitment to it, the forums have made the villages a great deal safer.

In most of the structures that are set up with SAPS in the province by the MEC for Safety and liaison, the CPFs are also included. This is mainly to be part of the community representatives in crime prevention. It is the duty of the CPF to organize awareness in the communities where they establish that the community does not understand the role of the police.

For instance, in the rural areas, the members of the community used to complain to the MEC that the police are not servicing them, they do not attend to their complaints, they go to work drunk, they misuse the government vehicles etc. Those frustrations were there because indeed in some stations there were not service delivery and as a result the relationship of the police with the community was nil. (Nexus Report, 2001).

In Lehurutshe in the Marico Area, the community once marched to the Station and demand that the Station Commissioner should resign from work. One of the major problems of the community was that the police do not attend to their cases as they call them, even when they community has made attempts to look for suspects and presented them to the police, the police always do not take action, they release the suspects.

The community was even suggesting that the station be closed. One of the questions that one had to ask when trying to come up with the solution to the problem was whether the station had the CPF and how does it relate to the station.

The absence of the CPF in that station made matters worse as no one was to mediate between the two parties. There was uncertainty and mistrust on both parties. The station had a number of old-fashioned, old-style police officers that did not understand the community role in their involvement in improving transparency and service delivery in the SAPS. Until such time that the

Community Police Forum in that station was established, then the community began to identify with the station.

The presence of the CPF in that area educated the people that no one is above the law, not the police officer, not the prosecutor and not the community member. It taught people about clarification of roles in the criminal justice system. This lessened the complaints and belief that police officers released criminals because they were their friends in corruption.

The CPF made the community to understand the procedures taken by criminal justice system in order for a person to be released or not to be released on bail. The community began to be educated and realized that police alone cannot deal with crime in their area, it need a joint effort of both parties.

In some stations where there are both white and African police officers, race almost spoiled the good intentions of the CPF, mainly because of lack of understanding of the role of the CPFs in stations, even by the same community that the CPF has to serve. The problem arises where the Executive members of the CPF are black people and the Station commissioner is white.

The tension would arise when the CPF request station commissioner to provide information on policing on a quarterly basis. The station commissioner would give them the information that he wants them to have and not give the whole information. It is still the attitude that *"I cannot account to them and the Area Commissioner at the same time."*

Some members of the CPF register themselves with an intention to deal with the station management rather than to support them. In some stations, the CPFs had to be disbanded by the Area Board, because of the bad relationship they had with the stations. They would mobilize the communities against the station when they fail to get what they wanted in the station. Some went to an extent of demanding the station vehicle to be allocated to the chairperson of the CPF,

whereas the station itself had a problem of lack of resources. The CPF mobilized the community to demand resources from the station or else they disband. (CPF Evaluation report, 2002).

5.2 Monitoring of the effectiveness and efficiency of the service.

The overall introduction of the CPF in South Africa, during the apartheid transition to democratic rule, appears to have been a good thing. CPFs have undoubtedly played a crucial role in assisting the SAPS to break from its apartheid- imposed isolation.

Effectively however the CPFs have enabled the police to establish relationships only with particular sections of local communities. While this is not itself a bad thing it may provide the police with a justification for believing that they are taking community concerns into account when in fact the CPF members have merely become part of a police "inner circle." (Rakgoadi, 1995)

This role of the CPF was never clear from the policy itself. The communities tend to interpret it in their own way that suits them. In some areas effective stations are those that are resourced and responds quick enough to their complaints. In some stations effectiveness of the service is rated according to the relationship that the station has with the CPF even if there is no relationship with the broader community.

Most CPFs have complaint that their stations are not well resourced. There is shortage of human resources, shortage of physical resources, poor infrastructure etc. These problems have come up as obstacles to CPF in terms of rating their own stations. The only rating that they use is to compare their stations with other stations, which always do not provide a fair judgment.

In most areas the CPF are very supportive to the station and are prepared to work despite the conditions that they find in the station. Some Areas along the

mining areas are very proud of their station performance because they have the resources even some sponsor from the mines.

Stations around Rustenburg area such as Phokeng, Mogwase, Mooi-nooi and Marikana are very fortunate. The mines have invested in the Police Stations and fund the programmes and projects of the CPFs. In such areas the CPFs are very effective because even though they are not paid but their strengths come from successful projects that they have.

In Mooi-nooi, the Platinum mine has funded a “youth against crime project” by sponsoring youth to attend the International School in Mafikeng where youth will be able to do studies that will allow them to be independent and at some stage plough back to the community. (Nexus Report, 2001)

On the other hand there are poor CPFs who are willing to work with the station and because of shortage of this and that in the station it is difficult for them to do their work, let alone to convene meetings. In some stations police officers are demoralized because they are overworked with lack of resources.

The CPFs are struggling to get support of police officers, there is tension between the two structures in some police stations. The community complains about poor service delivery and the CPF are also aware that the situation is not good. They advise the station and the Area to provide resources, but the response talks about the unavailability of funds and priority list of stations.

5.3 Advising the police regarding local policing priorities

The South African Police Act (1995) provides for the formulation of national policing priorities taking into account the provincial needs and priorities. The provincial executive therefore has the responsibility to determine how policing priorities within the province are to be determined in order to inform and influence the national priorities.

In the North West, South African Police Service used to determine these priorities alone. This has had its flaws, amongst which is the inevitable lack of ownership and understanding of police work by the communities in certain parts of the country as compared to their needs and priorities. This also failed to contribute meaningfully to the philosophy of community policing.

Currently the Department of Safety and Liaison in the province organizes and facilitate the establishment of policing priorities in the province. The Department liaise with the communities through community policing forums, area and provincial community policing boards with a view to improve transparency and accountability of the service to the communities. This is meant to promote joint problem identification and problem solving by the service and the community.

In this process the Community Policing Forums and other stakeholders such as the local government, traditional leader within the station jurisdiction, community based and non governmental organizations and the Department of Safety and Liaison meet to determine the policing priorities in their areas.

The community policing forums has the responsibility to look at their areas, the human and physical resources of the SAPS available, and be able to advise the SAPS to say, in this area there is shortage of vehicles and the area served by the station is too wide, or to say, although the station is equipped with vehicles, the vehicles do not last because of the nature of roads in the area, then they would make a proposal for 4x4 bakkies instead of sedans. (Nexus report, 2001).

The role of SAPS in this process is to include the proposed policing priorities in their Strategic plans. The Community Policing Forums include the policing priorities in their social crime prevention programmes and business plans. The Municipalities include the policing priorities in their Independent Development Programmes. These policing priorities also serve as a basis for the formulation of

the Strategic plan of the Department of safety and liaison in the province. (Community consultations Framework, 2002).

5.4. Promoting joint problem identification and problem solving by police and the community.

Community policing is what makes a police service different from a police force. Police officers work with the communities, they identify problems and solve them together rather than continuous arrests. This is partnership where both parties feel concerned about the situation of policing; both sides see to it that each is working honourably. Community Policing Forum jobs dovetail neatly with police work, as forum members see where the gaps are and try to make themselves useful. (Mashatile, 2003).

They are not allowed to arrest, for example, or to write down statements, they can still take on a range of activities that will make policing more effective. They can raise donations or solicit for equipment, like cars or cell-phones and many in the urban areas have done so.

When police want to conduct awareness in communities based on their crime analysis at the station, they request the Community Police Forum to brief the community and to mobilize the community. The forums implement the social crime prevention programmes such as adopt-a-cop, adopt-a-community leader, campaigns against women and child abuse, campaigns against stock theft, destroying market for stolen goods etc.

CHAPTER SIX

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE AND THE COMMUNITY IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE.

The implementation of community policing has created a set of new political and social relationships amongst communities. This has facilitated the process of transformation in the whole country. Although there is still a bit of resistance from other elements, but the process is moving forward. In some areas good relationship of the police and communities has dropped down the level of crime drastically. In areas where there is still resistance, it is mainly because of individual agendas.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the relationship between the police and the community and the factors that influence the attitudes towards police or vice versa. The chapter looks at factors that influenced successful relationships that let to effective and efficient CPF structures and those that are unsuccessful stories.

6.1 Successful relationships

In areas where Community Police Forums are a success, it is mostly in areas where crime is very minimal. The relationship starts from the first day of the formation of the forum. When the Station Commissioner has done his job well in inviting all stakeholders in his jurisdiction, and having briefed them well on the purpose of the forum, then it becomes easy for the forum to start with the support of other stakeholders.

The representation of the police station in CPF plays a major role in the relationship. The station management that attends the CPF meeting takes the feedback to his team. The CPF questions are answered right then by the station

management. As the relationship strengthens it spreads to other officers in the station.

It is not necessarily the role of the Community Policing Officer at the station to communicate and relate well with the CPF. To avoid a situation where members of the community perceive the police to be resistant to community policing and CPFs, it is best to have all police officers involved in crime prevention programmes with the communities.

The reason for this is that, when the communities see a policeman or policewoman, they only see a police officer, not a detective, Community Service Centre Officer, Dog Unit Officer etc, and they expect these people to serve them and protect them. The issue of police officers working in different Units or divisions is only known to police officers not the community, so the community's expectation is just service and nothing else.

In Hartebeesport area, in the Marico Area, the CPF representation is very good and has created a very effective forum. It is the area dominated by business people and farmers. At the election of the Executive of the forum, the community decided that all people should be represented in the committee.

The committee comprises of the Local businessman, a farm worker, unemployed youth, a representative from the squatter camp, and a community leader. The main idea is to have all the parties represented in the committee. In their committee they even considered the issue of representation in terms of race, gender and disability.

This is one of the successful CPF in terms of commitment. They have drawn programmes of crime prevention on all levels of people in their community, looking at their policing priorities. They raised funds to buy an extra vehicle for their station. That was when they realized that their station has been long on a resource distribution list of the Province. They donated a computer for detectives

and a laptop for a Community Policing Officer and funded many other social crime prevention programmes. They also installed cameras in their business and tourist attraction areas.

Some people felt that the forum was successful because it is in an area dominated by rich people. The truth is the forum was representative and committed to root out crime in their area. They were realistic to admit that although some people may like to be part of the CPF, the nature of their work could not allow them; as a result they donated anything to the station and the forum because it was impossible to donate their time.

The successful Forums are those that have worked hard to win the community over and get involved in various endeavors such as assisting the police in tracking down suspect thereby making the area safer.

In other Areas, such as Lehurutshe, the CPF made a submission to the MEC in the Province to request for the satellite station because the police station in Lehurutshe was serving a huge area with limited resources. They understood from their station commissioner that the police are committed to serve and protect them, but lack of resources was an obstacle. At first the station made a proposal, which was never successful because it had to be on a waiting list of the provincial resource distribution.

The community then recommended what used to be a community hall, to be used as a satellite police station. They felt that they use the tribal hall more often than the community hall, so the community hall was under used. This was one project of the CPF that was very successful because then it meant police officers had the support of their communities. The relationship of the community and the police is very good, to an extend that the community themselves hunt for suspects, especially for stock-theft and bring them to the police station.

6.2 Unsuccessful relationships

When members register as members of CPF with no understanding of their role and their mandate in terms of crime prevention, it makes their life or the life of their police partners difficult. The problems that arise from the CPF is analyzed by their Forum's orientation to the mandate of the forum. If the mandate was not clearly translated to the forum, then members will begin to ask for security fee, remuneration, vehicles, police uniforms etc.

In some areas the forum disband because the members understood the CPF Constitution to be giving them absolute power over the station management. Members of the CPF had demanded the police vehicles to work in community projects that are far from the SAPS mandate, they regarded that as part of serving the community. When the station management refused to let this happen then the CPF went back to the community to say the station management is not transforming and supportive to community projects.

In other areas such as the historically white areas, where the police station is found in town and only accessible to white minority, the majority of blacks staying in township and informal settlements are not considered when they CPFs are established, as a result the representation of the forum is lily-white, and the policing priorities of the black majority are not considered.

This normally destroys the relationship that the police officers have with the rest of the communities. They feel that the station concentrates mainly on putting black people in prison. The community does not give information to the police even when they know the suspects. The community tend to be hostile and mark the "No go" areas for the police. The police on the other hand feel that communities protect wanted suspects. Communication between police and community is very poor.

Still in other areas, which are predominantly white suburbs, where white and black community shares the station, the CPF are always vulnerable to racists.

Even when the station has established a forum, still some white members of the community do not want the black person to represent them, and vice versa.

In Koster, in the Marico area, all white members of the CPF withdrew from the CPF because they did not want to attend the meetings with the black community in the community hall but preferred the meeting to be held in their Rugby hall, which was not accessible to people staying in the township. When the station commissioner intervened to show them the importance of using the Community Hall, they all withdrew from the Forum. The white police officers do not participate in CPF projects and offer no support to the structure.

At first there was resistance from the police officers. They did not accommodate the CPF in their stations. Police officers felt that the police officers were taking their jobs, they were interfering with their investigations, they were interfering with their office work etc. there were just so many complaints about the relationship of police and CPFs at stations.

The situation became better after the provincial training of the CPF where all the forums attended and shared their successes and problems. Most members of the forum began to change their attitudes towards their fellow police officers and vice versa. The fact that CPF is a legitimate body with various powers and functions empowers people to challenge and question police actions in a constructive manner. This relationship is meant to be beneficial to both the community and the police.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE CPF IN THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO PREVENT CRIME

The Community Police Forums together with the police should establish and maintain partnership with the community. In taking this responsibility the CPF is faced with challenges that make it difficult for them to achieve their goals. The issue of shortage of resources in stations, bad relationship between the station and the communities and the general support that the CPF should get from the community and the government is not enough.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the challenges faced by the Community Police Forums in the province, in their responsibility of prevent crime.

7.1 Representativity

Community Police Forums should be representative of the community in the area. In some cases sub forums have been established to enable communities to articulate their concerns and interests in a more effective way. Most stations try very hard inviting community structures when establishing the CPFs, however the process is sabotaged by the fact that most structures join with different agendas. Some for political agenda, some for power, and some only want to get access to police files.

It is also difficult to specify the categories such as women, youth, and disabled when nominations are made, because in most cases people in those categories are not willing to take leadership roles, especially for structures that are not financially benefiting them. Such categories always have issues with the police, so they are still reluctant to work with the police.

Women's problems stem mainly from their relationship with police. When women have gone to the police station to lay charges of domestic violence and rape against their partners or strangers, the police have refused to take their statements and turned them away. Thus the women turned to powerless CPF but to no avail.

In essence, women's issues are not addressed at the entire forum and this is a source of frustration to them. The truth is the station commissioner and his Community Policing Officer may understand women issues and attend CPF meetings to represent police, but the constable whom members of the public first meet at the charge office may not be aware of the such issues.

7.2 Youth

Youth is another important constituency to participate in the CPFs. Most stations that have youth in their CPFs are very effective. The only problem with youth is that they are fine as they are not unemployed, but once they are elected to lead the structure, and they relocate to another area, the structure collapses.

In some stations politicians are attempted to influence the forum to deal with political matters and be rebellious against the station.. In some stations youth demanded to use the facilities and equipment of the station whenever they wished and without the station's permission. The pressures outside the structure negatively influence them.

7.3 Police Officers

The representation of police officers in the CPF is not enough. In most station only the station commissioner and the CPO attends the meetings of the CPF. The other officers whom the public meet at the charge office or who deals with the community complaints are not part of the meetings and they are seldom given feedback by their principals.

This is a very serious shortcoming because members of the community then perceive the police to be resistant to community policing. Because the officers do not have enough information on the work of the CPF they tend to feel threatened by the structure, they think CPF members are doing their job, they give the public information about the station and they want to control the station. They resist even in providing the CPF with the equipment such as telephones and computers in the station. This is the common to most police stations and illustrates that communication and education is rather poor.

7.4 Community Involvement

The communities do not support the CPF in their areas. The community attends the first meetings called by the station commissioner and elects a committee. They do not attend meetings. The forum does not get support from communities. Some members of the public have high expectation of the CPF to change their police station, and when this do not happen as quick as they expected they loose hope in the CPF. Some members of the CPF are threatened by the members of the community to be spies of police and sell-outs of the community.

Some community members wants to see crime prevention happening in their areas but they do not want to be party to that, as a result they donated money to the structure but not their time. When they perceive the crime rate to escalate and their safety to be threatened there is a high turn out at CPF meetings.

In the course of events people retire behind their high walls, get on with their lives and leave such activities to other people. In urban areas people are not committed to the CPF, they feel they are busier to be assistants to police, when the government is busy paying the police for preventing crime.

7.5 Support of other structures

It is important for structures such as the local government to work hand in hand with the CPF as partners in crime prevention. The problem is the counselors that are elected into positions of the CPF they use their own political agendas to address issues with the police. They use the platform in community meeting to campaign for their own political parties.

For others who do not have more supporters in the community, they take that as an advantage to discredit the government. They preach the ineffectiveness of police to discredit the government, and discourage the communities to participate in the CPFs.

In rural areas the traditional leaders also take advantage of the structure to instruct the police officers what to do and what not to do in their jurisdiction. It ends up causing a division in the community. They sometimes give the police the terms of references in their areas, to say for instance, the police should concentrate on stock theft and the priority crime for the areas only because two families lost stock.

7.6 Remuneration

Section 23(2) of the SAPS Act states that members of the CPFs render their services on a voluntary basis and have no claim to compensation. Most CPF members feel they should be compensated financially for service rendered. Some had been volunteers in various institutions of the government but they were remunerated.

It is true that the CPF members are volunteers but they must eat in their volunteering period and the station does not even provide them with food. They do not ask for salaries, but the money should be a token of appreciation that motivates them.

7.7 Risk of Involvement

The risks of involvement are related to the remuneration issue because members feel they should be compensated for putting their lives on the line. They act as a buffer between the community and the police. They are threatened and marked by thugs known to community and police but they are not protected. They are seen moving with police officers in townships and villagers and some community members call the “impimpis.”

The other thing that worries them most is that because they are not even in the payroll, when they are involved in accidents in duty with police officers they are not covered and yet the police officers would be remunerated.

7.8 Fundraising

The Department of Safety and Liaison provides funding for the projects of the CPF, but the money is always not enough. The Department encourages structures to raise funds from the committees to conduct their projects. Some structures manage to raise funds but others cannot, because of the socio-economic reasons.

In rural areas it is difficult to raise funds, as a large number of people are unemployed. In urban areas some companies and organization have managed to buy various items for the police and fund CPF projects. Some CPFs have managed to identify gaps in shortage of resources at their police stations and have addressed that gap.

Some CPFs have been unable to raise funds within their communities because they exists in rural areas and in informal settlements where business around the areas do not make enough money to survive let alone to donate any to the CPF.

This is a problematic experience by most structures in disadvantaged areas. They have also been unable to conduct projects in their areas.

7.9 Sustainability of the CPFs

In order for the CPFs to sustain themselves capacity building has to be encouraged and developed. In most of the stations the CPF have never been trained. Even for those who were trained they also threaten the structure because after being trained, some leave the structure because of employment, some relocate and some member's needs to take their positions and be trained.

The other problem is their term of their office; some spend the whole term without training and expected to be effective. Some structures would be lucky to get assistance of training from the NGOs for a particular need, but obviously it cannot be all of them. Effective CPF can only come from members who understand their role and prepared to apply their skills and competencies.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above study, a conclusion is drawn that the Community Police Forums exists in the North West. However they needs support of the communities they represent, the government that establish them and the Police Service partners. The problems and challenges have been outlined that continue to confront the South African Police Service and the Community Police Forums in the Province. These challenges are causing a delay in police and community partnership in crime prevention.

It is evident that not police officers alone can deal with crime in the North West Province. They need other structures such as the CPFs. Non-involvement of the communities in this exercise frustrates not only the police but even the communities when the police cannot track down the suspects. There is not much that is done by the local government to assist police in this regard.

Although the CPFs had been established in most stations in the province, there is an indication that because of the rural nature of the province, different challenges may be expected from different stations. The lack of resources, particularly in disadvantaged communities, is an ongoing factor hindering the development of democratic community policing. The scarcity of the business inhabited the possibility of raising funds locally.

The study recommends: first, the need to educate communities about the Community Policing Forums and its importance to the community and to the police. This should be based on mutual trust and information sharing between the police and the community. This task should be taken by the Department of Safety and Liaison as an oversight structure. The department should ensure that before forums are established there is mutual understanding of the mandate of the CPFs by both the community and the police. The police service should also

take it as its responsibility to educate its members about the function of the CPF. They should take CPF members as their partners in crime prevention but not as spies to the community. The police should do away with the conservative nature of its members and allow them to open up to the community so that the community will open up to them.

Secondly, in order for CPFs to sustain themselves capacity building has to be encouraged and developed. The Department of Safety and Liaison in the province has the responsibility to see to it that established CPF structures are sustainable. There is a fund allocated from the MEC's Office to all the CPF in the province. It is not enough money but it assists the Forums with the basics.

The proper budgeting should be done for the CPFs in the province. Needs analysis should be conducted on all CPFS. The term of office of CPF executive should be increased to at least five years to give them a chance to do proper planning and implementation of their projects. During this period there should be a form of incentive for them. The Department may decided to give them contracts just like contract workers in other government departments who are remunerated. This would not only motivate them, but would also give them a sense of commitment.

It would also be important for the CPFs to have strategic planning meetings with SAPS and the Department of Safety and Liaison in order to plan their activities more effectively. This would give them some vision as to where they want to go and what they hope to achieve. Further more they would be able to draw more people from the community if they have concrete plans.

Skills development plan should be drawn for the CPFs, so that they enjoy the learnership programmes. There is a need for fundraising skills, basic bookkeeping and budgeting, chairing a meeting, facilitation skills, minute taking, record keeping, communication and public relations skills as well as conflict resolution skills for the CPFs. Moreover people wanted to know about the

constitution and the bill of rights, their rights, criminal law, community policing and the role of CPFs – their powers and functions.

Thirdly, it is the Department of Safety and Liaison to ensure there is transformation in the SAPS. Police stations in the province are operating at different levels; some are more advantaged than others in terms of human, physical and material resources. It is therefore important that equitable distribution of resources to police stations should be considered. This impacts directly on the work of the CPFs, in the sense that the disadvantaged stations do not have enough resources to support the CPF projects and programmes.

In every station there should be an office of the CPF where the community can come or call at any time to talk to their representatives. Currently some advantaged stations have allocated an office, that is fully equipped for the CPF and some already have a shortage of space for their police work, worse than providing an office to CPF.

Lastly, the Department of Safety and Liaison should strengthen the monitoring and evaluation strategy for the CPFs. It should ensure enough education of the public about the CPF, approve the strategic plan of the CPF, provide resources to the CPF and well as ensuring that the environment they are working in is conducive for the time of work they do.

The funding allocated to the CPFs for projects should encourage participation of the community and should be part of community development. The department of Safety and Liaison should involve all community stakeholders in these projects to get the buy-in of the community.

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