



Community Policing Assessment: Progress and Opportunities in Bangladesh

March 2013



The Asia Foundation



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Over the last two decades, community policing has gained increasing international attention as a means for enhancing public security through police-citizen partnerships. In Bangladesh, initial efforts, led by the Bangladesh Police, started as early as 1992 in Mymensing and Natore Districts, and then spread to other parts of Bangladesh. In 2007, a community policing model was developed in the Rajshahi Range and other areas in the country. This work was later strengthened through a 2008 national strategy for community policing, instituted by the then Inspector General of Police. Over time, these reform efforts have been supported by a range of development partners, including: The Asia Foundation (TAF), most recently by working with 518 police-created Community Policing Forums (CPFs) in the Rangpur and Rajshahi Divisions, with financial assistance from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), through the Police Program launched in January 2005; the German Agency for International Development between 2008 and 2011; and the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), based out of the U.S. Department of Justice, predominantly through training in community policing and other areas.

Research Methods

This study applied a variety of qualitative research methods including roundtable discussions with senior police, focus groups with male and female citizens (adults and youth), and one-on-one interviews with mid-level police officers, business leaders and civil society representatives. Data was collected at Police Headquarters and three field locations: the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Command and two police stations that fall within its jurisdiction; as well as Gaibandha and Rajshahi District Police Commands, and one corresponding police station under each of these jurisdictions. The study covered sites that are receiving technical and financial assistance from TAF and other donors (most notably, UNDP), as well as those that are not.

Major Findings from the Assessment

- **Progress in building a national mandate for community policing.** In recent years, the Bangladesh Police have made significant advances in incorporating community policing into its organizational structure, policy and planning. These advances are a positive step in ensuring community policing becomes a part of the Bangladesh Police institutional culture and enhancing opportunities for sustainable police reform. However, higher level political support and a more influential set of incentives and drivers is required for broad based and durable implementation of community policing and police reform. Community policing is unlikely to become a firmly established practice in Bangladesh until the full support (both budgetary and

political) is achieved. Above all, motivation of all police leaders, as well as the creation of post for community policing officers at all tiers of the institution is essential.

- **Efficacy of current community policing strategies and guidelines.** While the Bangladesh Police has developed a number of policy documents on community policing, the top-down mandate and coordination of implementation efforts could be strengthened. A guidance note entitled “Community Policing: Concepts, Aims and Objectives” was created in 2007. However, this is an internal document intended for use by police only and while it is being followed by some police officers, both it and the community policing national strategy created in 2008 still lack full implementation.
- **Clarity and understanding of the community policing concept.** The basic written definitions of “community policing” are similar across the Bangladesh Police, and coincide with international practice. At the policy level, the Bangladesh Police essentially describes community policing as an “organizational philosophy” that involves citizen-police “partnership” and “problem-solving”. However, at the field level, there are issues with the interpretation of these definitions, especially regarding the extent to which citizens should be involved in police operations (e.g. patrols, capture of criminals, etc.). In some instances, citizen participation seems to be viewed as a force multiplier, or as a mechanism through which citizens are empowered to dictate what police do, rather than a support network for gathering information and providing testimony.
- **Scale and quality of community policing practices.** While taught to and implemented by many police officers, the concept of community policing has yet to be fully incorporated into all police training requirements and day-to-day duties in a systematic and standardized fashion. According to some of the police interviewed for this assessment, community policing practices are currently only carried out by those officers with strong personal initiative, a willingness to effectively navigate local-level political interests, and the popular support of their communities.

Opportunities for Strengthening Community Policing

Organizational drivers for a more integrated approach. International experiences highlight the need to go beyond the designation of community policing as a specialized function outside of regular duties, and instead make it an integrated part of administration, operations and training. The coordination of this kind of holistic approach ideally needs to be managed by one central body, which in the case of Bangladesh, is the Crime Prevention Center (CPC). The CPC should be a strong focal point for guiding operating procedures, as well as managing the different external agencies that provide support on community policing, including donors and local civil society groups. The CPC should help drive greater coherence and consistency

across community policing approaches, both in terms of training and practice, by, for example, establishing performance benchmarks and tracking progress against these in each district. Making data-driven, results-based analysis part of the CPC's responsibilities may help foster more effective management of local-level political interests that, according to participants in this study, are currently having a detrimental effect on community policing operations.

- **Updating the community policing policy framework.** It has been over five years since the two key community policing policy documents were created. As such, an opportunity exists to update these policies to reflect changes in operational context and practice. Any policy revisions should be informed by a systematic review of community policing guidelines and, ideally, would contribute to the development of a three to five year community policing strategic plan with simple operating procedures and a unified vision that underscores lessons learned thus far. Such a process could also help clarify the misconceptions that exist regarding citizens' roles in community policing. A revised policy framework for community policing might also include incentive systems that recognize the efforts and achievements of participating officers and/or citizens.
- **Systematic police training and citizen outreach on community policing practices.** As mentioned above, in order to be successful, community policing must be made an integrated part of the institutional police philosophy, including targeted training at all levels (e.g. from constables to senior police). Moreover, given the importance of police professionalism in influencing the level and quality of citizen trust and engagement with law enforcement, basic policing skills, such as taking of crime reports and the handling of investigations, must also be strengthened if community policing approaches are to be effective. To complement these efforts, increased community awareness raising and outreach activities would also enhance citizen support for, and willingness to participate in, community policing activities.
- **Harnessing and coordinating resources and partners.** In order for integrated organizational change to take place, it must be politically, administratively, as well as financially sustainable. The opportunities for strengthening the implementation of community policing, as outlined above, have been identified with the intention of minimizing the need for additional financial investment and making more strategic use of existing resources, with suggestions for how performance monitoring and incentive systems might help achieve these aims. Moreover, opportunities exist to improve coordination and coherence among the international development partners currently supporting community policing through technical and financial assistance, including by adopting more coordinated and targeted communication within the police structure through the CPC. Over time, increasing strategic partnerships and engagement with local civil society organizations has the potential to enhance the quality and increase the scope of community policing efforts at the grassroots level.

Introduction

Community policing is gaining increasing international attention as an effective approach for enhancing public security through police-citizen partnerships. In Bangladesh, initial efforts, using an adapted model of community policing, began in 1992 in Mymensing with the Town Defense Party, and Natore with the Stick and Whistle Party. Later, efforts to promote community policing spread to other parts of the country including Rangpur, Rajshahi, Chittagong and Dhaka. Eventually, in 2008, a national strategy for community policy was established in favor of a more standardized approach.¹

Over the years, these efforts have been supported by a range of development partners, including: The Asia Foundation (TAF), focusing most recently on 518 police-created Community Policing Forums (CPFs) in the Rangpur and Rajshahi Divisions;² the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Police Reform Program (PRP) launched in January 2005;³ the German Agency for International Development between 2008 and 2011 through a gender-based approach;⁴ and the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), based out of the U.S. Department of Justice, predominantly through training in community policing and other areas.⁵

Research Methods

¹ More detailed discussion about the development of community policing in Bangladesh, and current approaches, can be found in the background section below.

² TAF has been supporting community policing in Bangladesh since 2004. Current assistance is implemented with financial support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under the three year Community-Based Policing (CBP) Program launched in January 2011. The objectives of the CBP Program are to: strengthen police responsiveness to citizen needs; increase citizen engagement and trust in law enforcement; and expand the mandate for community policing as a strategic priority. For more information see: <http://asiafoundation.org/publications/pdf/879>.

³ The PRP is a “long-term comprehensive capacity building initiative to improve human security in Bangladesh” and aims to support “the transition from a colonial style police force to democratic policing by strengthening the Bangladesh Police’s ability to contribute to a safer and more secure environment based on respect for the rule of law, human rights an equitable access to justice.” The program is in its second phase, which runs from October 2009 – October 2014. For more information see: <http://www.undp.org.bd/projects/prodocs/PRP/FINAL%20PRP%20factsheet%20Mar%202011.pdf>.

⁴ Gender-Responsive Community-Based Policing is a project commissioned by the German Federal, the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), with co-funding from the Royal Netherlands Embassy and the Agencia Espaniola de Cooperacion Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID). The leading execution agency within the Bangladesh government was the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. It has piloted in 4 districts—Madaripur, Bogra, Mymensingh and Thakurgaon—in an effort to establish and strengthen trust between and the local communities they serve, especially women. For more information see: <http://www.giz.de/themen/en/33774.htm>.

⁵ “ICITAP works with foreign governments to develop professional and transparent law enforcement institutions that protect human rights, combat corruption, and reduce the threat of transnational crime and terrorism. ICITAP supports both national security and foreign policy objectives through a comprehensive range of public safety development expertise.” For more information see: <http://www.justice.gov/criminal/icitap/>.

This study was completed in late 2012, and combines different qualitative research methods to analyze the current community policing guidelines, identify key challenges and opportunities, and to make recommendations for the future. These research methods included roundtable discussions with senior police, focus groups with male and female citizens (both adults and youth), and one-on-one interviews with mid-level officers, business leaders and civil society representatives. Citizens interviewed included those that have collaborated on community policing, as well as those that have not.

Roundtable discussions were held in Dhaka at Police Headquarters, while focus groups and one-on-one interviews took place in three different field sites. These sites were selected in order to ensure a diversity of perspectives and experiences, including in relation to levels of engagement with external partners, notably TAF and UNDP. The first field site was the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Command Center and two police stations that fall within its jurisdiction, one of which is being supported by the UNDP Police Reform Program. The second and third field sites were the Gaibandha and Rajshahi District Police Commander Centers, and one corresponding police station under each of these jurisdictions, both of which currently receive assistance from TAF.

In addition to the field research, this assessment involved a desk review of all existing documents produced by the Bangladesh Police to guide the implementation of community policing. These included: an internal guidance note entitled “Community Policing: Concepts, Aims and Objectives” developed by Additional Inspector General (IGP) Shahidul Hoque in 2007;⁶ a national community policing strategy developed in 2008;⁷ and five community policing orders or directives, which have been produced and circulated to all field offices since the development of the national strategy.

The assessment team met with both senior and mid-level officers and citizens in all three field locations. With regard to the citizens, special care was taken to obtain a strong representation of both male and female perspectives, including through the use of separate focus group sessions for women.

Background on Reform and Community Policing in Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Police history dates back to the time of British colonial rule when, in 1840, a police commissioner was established in the Indian Territory. During that same period, in 1861, the British Parliament passed the Bangladesh Police Act V of 1861,⁸ under which control of the police was vested in the provincial government. This act

⁶ See the *Community Policing: Concept, Aims and Objectives*, A.K.M. Shahidul Hoque, BPM, PPM, Additional Inspector General, Bangladesh Police, 2007.

⁷ See the *Community Policing: National Strategy for Bangladesh*, Bangladesh Police, 2008.

⁸ See the *1861 Police Act (Act No. V of 1861)*, Ministry of Law.

established the police as an institution that maintains law and order and remains the regulating framework for police in Bangladesh today.

After partition from India in 1947, the Bangladesh Police was renamed the East Bengal Police and later the East Pakistan Police. Finally, during Bangladeshi independence in 1971, it was recognized as a national force under the new government. Since then, while many of the old regulations from British times continue to guide operations, the police have also undertaken significant reforms. These include the development of a draft 2007 Bangladesh Police Ordinance,⁹ which seeks to depoliticize operations and decision-making, as well as decentralize some police responsibilities currently concentrated at Police Headquarters and with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA). The ordinance also seeks to create an independent National Police Commission to make recommendations for the appointment of the Inspector General of Police, as well as an autonomous Police Complaints Commission.

While the 2007 ordinance has yet to be approved by MOHA, it is noteworthy, given that a significant number of former and current senior police, security experts and other government officials were involved in its drafting. As such, the draft ordinance represents a significant step in the larger reform effort taking place within the Bangladesh Police today, of which community policing is a key component.

As mentioned above, a national strategy for community policing was developed and approved by the Bangladesh Police in 2008, through technical and financial support from the UNDP-supported Police Reform Program. However, community policing efforts in Bangladesh commenced well before then. Initial work began in the early 1990s, when the community policing approach became seen by senior leadership within the Bangladesh Police as a way to help the police move from being a primarily reactive force, to a proactive and preventive police service.

The first police-citizen endeavor was the “Town Defense Party” initiative, implemented in the Mymensingh District in the early 1990s. The Mymensingh approach was subsequently adopted by several other locations throughout Bangladesh, including Natore District, with its “Stick and Whistle Party”, as well as the Rajshahi and Rangpur Districts.

Anecdotal evidence from interviews with police and citizens undertaken as part of this assessment, indicate that these early innovations helped motivate police and citizens to rethink their perceptions about each other, and bridge the gap through increased communication and joint actions. For example, police consulted during the assessment recalled that community members began to support their efforts by reporting crimes, serving as witnesses and providing information about “risky” behavior patterns. However, in some cases, it was apparent that these initiatives also appeared to promote

⁹ See the Bangladesh Police Ordinance, 2007 (Draft).

a model of community policing that involved deputizing citizens by employing them in police operations, such as patrols, and even the capture and arrest of criminals. Interviews and focus group discussions with police and citizens suggest that this misunderstanding of community policing as a “multiplier effect” seems to be quite commonplace within the police, even still today.

Major Findings from the Assessment

Progress in building a national mandate for community policing

In recent years, the Bangladesh Police has made some significant advances in incorporating community policing into its organizational structure, policy and planning. These institutional advances include:

- Creation of a Crime Prevention Center (CPC). The CPC was created as a focal point at Police Headquarters in Dhaka for organizing, tracking and supervising all community policing efforts nationwide. The CPC is the principal body for data collection, management and dissemination of community policing instructions and guidelines, and is overseen by a Superintendent of Police (SP) with expertise in community policing, who reports to the Additional IGP Crime. Until such time that external donor support is no longer required, the CPC has also taken on the role of central coordinator of external assistance to the Bangladesh Police.
- Incorporation of community policing in the Bangladesh Police 2012 – 2014 Strategic Plan. The strategic plan highlights the need to approve the national strategy for community policing, develop CPF charters, monitor community policing progress, and communicate more regularly with CPF members. This is the second strategic plan created by the police, and the inclusion of community policing demonstrates its growing importance.
- Prioritization of community policing within municipal and divisional operations. This was done by the current Inspector General of Police when he designated the Deputy Inspector Generals (DIG) and Commissioners that oversee municipal and divisional operations as community policing coordinators in February 2011. It is not yet clear how this new designation has affected police operations in practice.
- Limitation of rotation for Community Policing Officers (CPOs). Commencing in February 2010, a new limitation on rotations was set by the current Inspector General of Police for CPOs at no more than one rotation every two years. This provided greater continuity and relationship-building opportunities in the communities in which CPOs serve. While it is still not

clear that this practice is being followed in the field, the creation of written orders is the first step in establishing it as a priority.

- Creation of a mandate to hold open houses at police stations. While not yet being implemented in full, where they are operating, this assessment found that open houses seem to be very well received by citizens. Because open houses involve the participation of various communities within any one sub-district, citizens report that they provide a means for interacting with senior police in a more non-confrontational and neutral setting than would be the case otherwise.
- Standardization of a community policing message in a 30-minute video. This video was created in 2012 by senior officers who currently oversee community policing, including the Inspector General and Additional Inspector General of Crime in Dhaka. It is intended to be used as a general guide for community policing, and to demonstrate the importance of this concept within police culture. The video emphasizes transparency, accountability and skilled service delivery, as well as the move from a reactionary to preventive police service. The video stresses that community policing is an opportunity for citizens to act as a support system, but not take on the role of the police.
- Designation of approximately 20,000 Community Policing Forums (CPFs). CPFs were first designated within the national strategy in 2008, and now operate nationwide. Although the overall quality and level of activity of the CPFs varies significantly across communities, police and community residents directly involved in their efforts agree that CPFs have played an essential role in increasing positive police-citizen interactions in their communities. CPFs form an integral part of the community policing strategy in Bangladesh, however, maintaining them active, politically neutral and in good communication and collaboration with local police remains a challenge.

Taken together, these advances suggest a positive trend in ensuring community policing becomes part of the Bangladesh Police institutional culture. By implementing these changes across all levels of the police, both within field operations, as well as at police headquarters, the prospects for sustainable community policing reform are enhanced. However, higher level political support and a more influential set of incentives and drivers is required for broad based and durable implementation of community policing and police reform. Community policing is unlikely to become a firmly established practice in Bangladesh until the full support (both budgetary and political) is achieved. Above all, motivation of all police leaders, as well as the creation of post for community policing officers at all tiers of the institution is essential.

Efficacy of current community policing strategies and guidelines

While the Bangladesh Police have developed a number of policy documents on community policing, the top-down mandate and coordination of implementation efforts could be stronger. A guidance note entitled “Community Policing: Concepts, Aims and Objectives” was created in 2007. However, this is an internal document intended for use by police only and while it is being followed by some police officers, both it and the community policing national strategy created in 2008 still lack full implementation.

In addition, as the two documents were created in 2007 and 2008 respectively, they are somewhat outdated in that they do not necessarily reflect the current operating context in Bangladesh, and do not apply important achievements and lessons learned during the implementation process since then. Moreover, they do provide specific guidance for CPOs in the field, particularly as these documents pre-date the establishment of CPO positions. The need to reconsider the efficacy of the current policy framework is also confirmed by the views of most police and citizens consulted as part of this assessment, who felt that the effectiveness of community policing currently depends on the individual CPO and/or his or her superior (Officer-in-Charge of the police station, or even the SP that oversees any one district).

In this context, there remains a need for community policing to be more clearly defined as an organizational standard that can be uniformly supported and implemented in field operations. Some of these issues are discussed further below.

Clarity and understanding of the community policing concept

To begin the community policing assessment, the research team looked at the current definition of community policing as used by the Bangladesh Police. Two different, but essentially complementary definitions were discovered in the desk review. First, as defined by the Bangladesh National Strategy, community policing is:

“A philosophy and an organizational strategy that allows the police and community to work closely together in new ways to solve the problems of crime, fear of crime, physical and social disorder and neighborhood decay. This philosophy rests on the belief that law-abiding people in the community deserve input into the police process. It also rests in the belief that solutions to contemporary problems demand freeing both citizens and the police to explore creative, new ways to address neighborhood concerns beyond a narrow focus on individual incidents of crime.”¹⁰

Second, as outlined in Additional IGP Admin Mr. Shahidul Hoque’s 2007 guidance note:

“Community policing is an organization-wide philosophy and management approach that promotes community, government and police partnerships,

¹⁰ See page 2 of the *Community Policing: National Strategy for Bangladesh*, Bangladesh Police, 2008.

proactive problem-solving and community engagement to address the common causes of crime, fear of crime and community issues.”¹¹

These statements coincide with current international practice, as reflected, for example, in the definition of community policing adopted by the U.S. Department of Justice:

“Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder and fear of crime.”

In all three cases listed here, the definitions point to community policing as an “organizational philosophy”. In addition, they all reference citizen-police “partnership” and “problem-solving” as key components in this process. Finally, while the last two definitions are very similar in nature, the first one actually expands a bit on their content to underscore the value of law abiding citizens’ participation in this process. This is an important distinction to make and helps differentiate between the role of citizens who support the rule of law, versus that of citizens who take the law into their own hands.

Notwithstanding the basic alignment of these definitions, the assessment found issues with their interpretation, both at the policy level - including within the two Bangladesh Police policy documents themselves - and in the field. For instance, the guidance note states that community policing means “involving people in police duties”. It also says that “members of the community policing committees play an important role in capturing notorious criminals”. These two statements can still be loosely interpreted as citizens supporting police work; however, when combined with the following sentences about the role of citizens, they raise some concerns regarding how involved citizens might become in police operations:

“They [the citizens] try to collect intelligence about the movements and whereabouts / hideouts of the outlaws”.

“They themselves, also, can capture the criminals.”¹²

When viewed as a whole, these statements may be open to misinterpretation in the application of the community policing strategy. The perspectives of police and citizens consulted as part of this assessment substantiate this concern. For example, some citizens felt that “community policing” provided a mechanism through which citizens are empowered to dictate what police do. Some police officers explained their “community

¹¹ See page 7 of the *Community Policing: Concept, Aims and Objectives*, A.K.M. Shahidul Hoque, BPM, PPM, Additional Inspector General, Bangladesh Police, 2007.

¹² See page 28 of the *Community Policing: Concept, Aims and Objectives*, A.K.M. Shahidul Hoque, BPM, PPM, Additional Inspector General, Bangladesh Police, 2007.

policing” practice as providing citizens with arm bands, sending them on unaccompanied night patrols, and having them report back to police on these duties. In a few cases, these citizens were said to have been provided with a small stipend for their efforts.

The reason for these misconceptions may be historical in nature, as the earlier citizen support groups, such as the Ansar Village Defense Party (VDP), were used to assist police in times of great need, including natural disasters or other catastrophes. However, it could also be due to the significant shortage of police officers that has always, and currently still, plagues the Bangladesh Police. Whatever the reason, this practice is dangerous because it can lend itself to a blurring of the lines between police and citizens, and risks encouraging socially destructive practices such as vigilantism.

Rather than using citizens as a “force multiplier” in police operations, international experience suggests that community policing should involve asking citizens to communicate more regularly with police, and to report crimes and overall crime patterns that they might be aware of taking place in their area. In instances where their testimony is appropriate, citizens might also serve as witnesses in cases that police are investigating. However, they should not take on regular police functions or, in effect, be deputized as an auxiliary police force.

Scale and quality of community policing practices

During interviews, focus groups and roundtable discussions completed as part of this assessment, both police and citizens seemed to accept and even support community policing as a means for improving police-citizen relations and solving crime. However, at an institutional level, the concept of community policing has yet to be fully incorporated into all police training requirements and day-to-day duties in a systematic and standardized fashion.

Many mid-level police that participated in this assessment reported that after attending community policing courses, they were not encouraged by their supervisors to apply what they had learned in the field. In some cases, officers reported that they were actively discouraged from operationalizing community policing practices, as these were seen by supervisors as a distraction from ‘regular’ duties. Mid-level police officers also felt they were receiving conflicting supervisory messages from senior police at both headquarters and in the field. Senior and mid-level police also reported that community policing practices are predominantly carried out only by those officers with strong personal initiative, including the willingness and ability to effectively navigate and manage local-level political interests, and who enjoy the popular support of the communities they serve.

While some of the officers interviewed felt it was important to have a more structured mandate and systematic approach for community policing, it was widely asserted that

community policing could only be implemented in Bangladesh at a more tactical level, at the behest of individual police officers in particular locations. These doubts about the prospects for a more strategic approach could be based on the long history in Bangladesh of police having relatively limited control over strategic priorities, as well as larger budgetary concerns. There may also be concerns about the prospects for higher-level endorsement of an approach which effectively institutionalizes the transfer of authority from local and national political leaders and senior police, to mid-level police officers in the field.

Whatever the case, the seemingly widespread support for, or at least limited interest in blocking, community policing among the officer cadre suggests there may potential for greater institutionalization of community policy approaches in future. While the ultimate decision to approve the National Community Policing Strategy rests with MOHA, most senior and mid-level police, as well as citizens interviewed as part of this assessment, appeared interested in having some sort of national mandate endorsed at the ministerial level.

Opportunities for Strengthening Community Policing

Organizational drivers for a more integrated approach

International experiences highlight the need to go beyond the designation of community policing as a specialized function outside of regular police duties, and instead make it an integrated part of administration, operations and training. The community policing philosophy should be incorporated in all personnel training and job responsibilities, in order to accomplish the goal of cultural change in support of crime prevention through citizen-police partnership. Such an integrated approach requires ongoing feedback across various divisions and ranks within the police to ensure that all areas are working together toward the same goal. The coordination of this holistic approach ideally needs to be managed by one central body with the capacity to communicate throughout all levels of the police.

In Bangladesh, this kind of organizational driver exists within the Crime Prevention Center (CPC); however, to date, the potential has yet to be fully realized. Although the CPC has been designated as the central coordinating body for all community policing activities within the national strategy, it is not clear to what degree the CPC is currently playing this coordination and communication role. The CPC should be a strong focal point for guiding operating procedures, as well as managing the different external partners that provide support for community policing, including donors and local civil society groups. For instance, the CPC should collect information on the number and quality of community policing field activities taking place in districts across the country. Ideally, it should also highlight lessons learned from successful efforts, as well as provide feedback to local police stations to help address any challenges they are facing. Identification and promotion of high-performing districts and/or police stations should

be a priority for demonstrating how and why the community policing model is effective. The results of this process could also be shared through quarterly meetings coordinated by the CPC.

The CPC should help drive greater coherence and consistency across community policing approaches, both in terms of training and practice by, for example, establishing performance benchmarks, against which progress could be tracked in each district. The Inspector General of Police can validate this approach, by drawing attention to the role of the CPC in coordinating, monitoring and supervising this process based on the established standards. With such a system in-place, the importance of community policing within the organization overall would be more evident for line personnel and, in order to meet the standards, mid to senior-level staff would be more likely to prioritize community policing as part of day-to-day operations. Standards to be tracked might include: the existence and quality of concrete citizen-police partnerships; awareness-raising among citizens of police activities; and successful implementation of and follow-up on open house events.

Finally, while the identification of community concerns and crime related challenges takes place at the local level, it is important that consideration is also given to sharing the outcomes and solutions arrived at as a result of these processes. Ensuring those stories are highlighted, both locally through open houses and CPF meetings, as well as nationally through dissemination of best practices and lessons learned, may be a useful way to demonstrate the success of community policing to citizens, police and other stakeholders. To that end alone, the CPC should be given the mandate to monitor and evaluate these aspects of community policing operations.

Making data-driven, results-based analysis part of the CPC's responsibilities could encourage CPF members and district-level command to develop activities that successfully tackle the root causes of crime challenges, rather than simply meeting the needs or interests of politically powerful stakeholders. Over time, such an approach may help foster more effective management of local-level political interests and influences, which, according to participants in this study, are currently having a detrimental effect on community policing operations.

Updating the community policing policy framework

As noted above, it has been over five years since the two key community policing policy documents were created. As such, an opportunity exists to update these policies to reflect changes in the operational context and practice. Ideally these updates would be informed by a systematic review of the current community policing guidelines to strengthen and build upon achievements and lessons learned thus far. It will be critical to ensure that any updated community policing policies and guidelines are disseminated at all levels of the organization, particularly among constables, the lowest level within the police rank and file, and frequently the position that has the most contact with

citizens. A range of other policy and planning considerations may be valuable to explore as part of any update to the community policing policy framework in Bangladesh:

- Community policing strategic plan. The development of a three to five year strategic plan for community policing, including clear descriptions of the roles, expectations and overall objectives of community policing in Bangladesh, and with an emphasis on measuring results, could also underscore the makeup, achievements and lessons learned from specific community policing activities.
- Development of operating procedures. The development of simple operating procedures, incorporating a unified vision for community policing, could help to clarify the misconceptions that exist regarding citizens' roles in community policing, as outlined above. Such operating procedures could cover CPFs, open houses, joint patrols and other activities, as well as specific CPO functions and responsibilities. Appendices A, B and C of this document outline some suggestions for inclusion in any future operating procedures.
- Incentive systems for participating police and/or citizens. To help encourage police to put community policing policies into practice, community policing needs to be included in annual work plans, with measurable goals to be achieved. To overcome some of the institutional barriers outlined above, innovative incentive systems could be considered, including rewards for personnel that effectively lead or participate in community policing efforts. Initially such incentives could remain simple, while still providing a means for recognizing and promoting strong citizen-police partnerships that help address the root causes of crime. These incentives can be low cost and might include award ceremonies, the creation and distribution of special pins or medals, and events such as a meal with senior police to highlight successes. This kind of recognition would help underscore the importance of community policing for the organization, as well as provide an opportunity to highlight best practices and lessons learned across the police.
- Simplifying community policing approaches. Part of what typically makes community policing successful is that it involves the identification of locally developed solutions and use of local resources for addressing local level problems. While the institutional mandate needs to come from a strong top-down and strategic framework, implementation approaches need to be kept simple enough to avoid institutional hierarchy and bureaucracy slowing things down. Some participants in this assessment observed that the current CPF structure, involving a 15 – 20 person working committee, and a 4 – 10 person advisory group, may be too complex. According to those interviewed, the presence of so many key leadership positions in the CPF also increased the risk of politicization of CPF activities, as the focus of monthly meetings frequently became about speeches given by these leaders, instead of efforts to address

crime problems. A simpler approach involving “working groups”, or sub-committees that collaborate on specific issues, may be more effective. More on this suggestion can be found in Appendix C entitled: “How is a CPF Structured?”.

Systematic police training and citizen outreach

Police professionalism is a key ingredient of community policing. It directly influences the degree of legitimacy that the police have among citizens and their ability to forge much needed partnerships and positive interactions with the community. As mentioned above, in order to be successful, community policing must be made an integrated part of the institutional police philosophy. Training that reflects this integrated approach should be given to police at all levels, and efforts must be made to follow-up on and monitor the police ability to apply classroom concepts in the field (through CPC oversight, as outlined above). The following points highlight areas that might help contribute to a more integrated community policing approach through enhanced training.

- Community policing training requirements tailored for all levels of police. The training of **constables** is critical to the success of community policing, as they are the largest group within the police and typically citizens’ first point of interaction. Significant effort should be placed on professionalization that enhances their role and capacity to respond to citizen needs through basic skills in communication and problem identification and resolution. These concepts will serve as a foundation for constables, who should be seen as the main institutional resource for boosting community policing efforts and the overall Bangladesh Police response to crime. For **mid-level officers**, community policing training ideally should involve a minimum three-day accredited course that meets international standards, while still adapting to the local context and security situation. These courses should be made a regular part of cadet training, as well as built into a refresher course system. As leaders of the institution, all **senior officers** should also participate in abbreviated versions of the community policing courses. Ideally, a minimum four to eight-hour course would help senior officers to ensure a more unified overall approach to community policing within the institution, as well as better coordination and dissemination of information across divisions.
- Critical complementary policing skills to be strengthened. Areas that require direct interactions with citizens are particularly relevant to the success of community policing and include the capacity to: take and follow-up on a crime reports; handle an investigation; make community visits to schools, bazaars and other public places; and organize a police station environment that welcomes citizens as guests. Training should be provided to highlight these capacities and their importance to the success of community policing. Moreover, within these areas, specific emphasis should be placed on preventing and resolving some of

the more highly prevalent crimes that affect under-represented and minority communities, especially regarding issues of gender-based violence. Police need to be well trained in the legal frameworks and procedures for responding to these crimes.

To complement more systematic training efforts for police, increased community awareness-raising and outreach activities would also help build understanding and support among the other key stakeholders in community policing; **citizens**. Even amongst citizens that already collaborate with police on community policing, this assessment showed that there is still significant confusion about the concept of community policing. As the other half of the police-citizen partnership, it is crucial that citizen stakeholders develop a concrete understanding of community policing, and how they can become involved. This can be done both through training for key community level partners (e.g. CPF members), as well as greater community outreach efforts. The focus should be on increasing citizen support for and willingness to collaborate with police, while still creating realistic expectations that do not expand their role beyond its proper scope.

Harnessing and coordinating resources and partners

In order for integrated organizational change to take place, it must be politically, administratively, as well as financially sustainable. The opportunities for strengthening the implementation of community policing, as outlined above, have been identified with the intention of minimizing the need for additional financial investment and making more strategic use of existing resources, with suggestions for how performance monitoring and incentive systems might help achieve these aims.

Opportunities also exist to improve coordination and coherence among the international development partners supporting community policing in Bangladesh. As noted above, the main international partners currently include the UNDP, which supports the Police Reform Program, the U.S. Department of Justice, which supports the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) and TAF, which supports the USAID-funded CBP program. One of the key recommendations made by mid-level and senior police interviewed as part of this assessment was that international assistance would be more effective if implemented in a more coordinated and conceptually coherent way. In particular, they stressed the need for increased communication both among and between the international partners and the police. For example, participants felt that communication between the different divisions in police headquarters and the field, and especially with the CPC, needed to be improved in relation to all community policing training and field activities. There was also a call for greater alignment in terms of key concepts and approaches across the various programs.

More strategic use of available resources could also include the harnessing of in-kind contributions from citizens. According to those interviewed for this assessment, many CPOs currently engaged in community policing are paying the cost of running CPF meetings (refreshments, etc.) using their own, personal funds. In this context, consideration could be given to enlisting the help of local citizens in covering such costs, whether directly or in-kind (e.g. bringing refreshments). Of course, this would need careful management to ensure that such contributions remained voluntary and were not used by CPF participants to garner favor. While funds are available for these activities at the “model” police stations, this has reportedly created some frustration among some CPOs and citizens that do not currently receive the same assistance. In the medium to longer term, investment in planning, performance monitoring and incentive systems, such as those outlined above, may enable a more self-sustaining, streamlined and scalable approach to financing for community policing.

As part of this effort, increasing strategic partnerships and engagement with local civil society organizations, over time, has the potential to strengthen the quality and increase the scope of community policing efforts at the grassroots level. In particular, the strong local level networks of these organizations are a valuable resource. However, police and citizens interviewed for this assessment observed that such networks have only recently been accessed, and in limited areas. For example, since 2011, police and citizens in the Rangpur and Rajshahi Divisions have had the opportunity to collaborate with local community-based civil society organizations, as part of the TAF-supported CBP. However, over the long term, affordable and effective community policing in Bangladesh is likely to depend upon a more strategic approach for harnessing the capacity of civil society partners and networks to mobilize people, disseminate information and provide support for police-citizen collaboration across the country.

Looking toward the future

This assessment has confirmed that with the current capacity already in place, and the general acceptance of community policing both within the Bangladesh Police and amongst communities, there is a solid foundation upon which to build future reform efforts, including through more integrated organizational drivers, updated policy frameworks, more systematic training and increased community outreach.

Given the need for budgetary restraint and realistic expectations about the pace of large-scale organizational change, these efforts will need to be gradually introduced over time, taking account of the broader political and economic context of Bangladesh.

However, as highlighted in this assessment, there are a range of areas where the Bangladesh Police, with well coordinated and strategic support from both international and local partners, can further consolidate and accelerate the scaling up of community policing practices across Bangladesh as a fundamental element of its overall reform agenda.

Appendix A: Suggested Guidelines for Police Station Open Houses

What is an Open House?

An open house is a day in which members of the public are invited to visit with police in a way in which they do not normally have access. Typically, an open house is held at the police station; however, it can also take place in other locations where it is easy for the general public to arrive. Often times, it involves citizen participants from a variety of different wards overseen by the station, and is hosted by local senior police such as the officer-in-charge of the station, or the superintendent or deputy inspector general that oversee the district or division. The presence of these senior officials among citizens from a variety of surrounding communities helps ensure neutrality and eliminate political and other barriers between the police and people.

Open houses complement other community policing activities that take place in the community, such as forums, school visits or “walkalongs”, by actually bringing citizens into the station to interact more with senior police.

What are the Arrangements for Holding an Open House?

The atmosphere for an open house should be cordial and welcoming. If possible, beyond just speaking with the police about any potential grievances or other issues, citizens should also be provided an opportunity to observe the police station work environment to gain a sense of daily police responsibilities. During their visit to the station, citizens can become familiar with service delivery centers, how and where to report crimes and other areas of the station. They can also receive cards with the direct phone numbers of the police officers in their area.

What are the Benefits of an Open House for the Community?

A large numbers of citizens attend the open houses from multiple communities, and no one community member leads the events. This means that citizens have more of an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns, because their message is not being influenced by traditional leaders from within their respective communities. In addition, by bringing citizens out of their neighborhood and into the station, it helps them understand police responsibilities and the work environment in a non-threatening way, which may encourage them to return to the station to file reports in the future. Finally, open houses also provide an opportunity for citizens to learn more about CPFs and regular community policing activities in their area.

How do the Police benefit from an Open House?

An open house provides an opportunity for police to receive information directly from citizens that helps lead to the amelioration or eradication of crime problems. It also

provides a chance to compare crime issues across different wards within one setting, and perhaps identify potential trends throughout their jurisdiction. Through the interactions police have with citizens at the open house, they can bridge the gap that exists between them, and ultimately enhance mutual trust and avenues for communication and collaboration.

What Typically Happens at an Open House?

The open house need not be costly or ceremonial in nature; it is simply a way for citizens and the police to communicate with each other directly without any barriers. Local police are responsible for organizing the open house, and should provide a very brief opening statement that welcomes citizens and updates them on any recent progress in crime prevention in the local area. If possible, a sound system with a microphone for citizens to speak should be provided so that everyone in the audience can hear what is said. Also, open houses have been known to attract a crowd of even a few hundred people, so chairs should be provided if possible. Finally, potentially poor weather considerations, such as extreme heat or rain, should be taken into account and planned around if possible as turn-out will be higher when the weather is better.

At some point during the open house, citizens should have an opportunity to share concerns or information they have about crimes in their area. Their comments and/or questions should be kept brief and or monitored by a mid-level officer, so as to provide an opportunity for as many people to speak as possible. To be effective, the police must show that they have a plan for addressing any concerns raised, and eventually report back to citizens (either in the next open house, through media, or CPFs).

Arrangements to ensure availability of chairs and a sound system should take place a few days prior to the event. However, because open houses are such large gatherings, police and citizens should not feel the need to worry about providing refreshments.

How will the People find out about an Upcoming Open House?

There are many different ways that the local police can advertise an open house. The following are some suggestions for building awareness:

- Coordinate with local CPF members.
- Post flyers in bazaars, schools and other public places in the surrounding areas.
- Utilize media resources to broadcast the location, date and time of the open house, such as the local paper, megaphones, etc.
- Work with local businesses to sponsor open houses in exchange for advertising space (i.e., banners) at the event.

How Should Citizen Participation be managed during an Open House?

Citizens that attend an open house might have strong feelings about the issues they bring up. These feelings and opinions should be welcomed, yet managed. This is an opportunity to show community members that the police care about their concerns. Managing a large crowd can sometimes be challenging and the following are some suggestions for a successful open house:

- Remember community members, like the police, are busy with their everyday lives and it is important to respect the start and end time.
- Begin by explaining the open house purpose, objectives and rules.
- Keep on task and do not allow too much repetitive discussion that loses the enthusiasm and attention of the crowd.
- Give everyone the chance to speak that wants to.
- People must feel free to voice their feelings and opinions – it is natural and acceptable that not everyone will agree.
- If people begin to talk over each other, become angry or start to bully someone, the facilitator must control this - the use of friendly or humorous techniques will help lessen the tension and keep speakers to their allotted time.
- The facilitator or police may disagree with what is being said, but it is important to not voice an opinion or use negative body language that may deter citizens from speaking out - just listen!
- The police cannot solve all community problems but people like to feel that they are being heard - this also helps alleviate the fear of crime that citizens may have.

How can the Police Follow-up between Meetings?

Throughout the open house, an assisting officer should take note of the issues that are raised by each speaker. At the end of the meeting, that officer, or his or her superior, should address any issues and demonstrate that they have or will formulate a plan to do so.

If a citizen brings up a specific crime that needs immediate attention or the filing of a police report, an assisting officer should immediately request the citizen submit the report as soon as possible after the meeting. Examples of this could be a situation where there is any danger to a child or elderly person, a major domestic violence case or an impending serious crime.

In between open houses, the attending officer should share and ensure all issues raised are addressed by key personnel at the station. Issues should be investigated to substantiate their legitimacy, and then followed-up on to their fullest.

Appendix B: Suggested Guidelines for Community Visits or “Walkalongs”

What is a Community Visit or “Walkalong”?

Community visits, or “walkalongs” are an activity jointly implemented by police and citizens, organized through a cooperative relationship between the two groups. Through these joint community visits or walkalongs, citizens participate on a voluntary basis to support police in resolving and preventing crimes before they happen. Police, in turn, strengthen their overall effectiveness through trust and information provided to them by citizens.

What exactly do Community Visits or “Walkalongs” Involve?

During community walkalongs, police and citizens visit different crime-prone areas in the community to develop a vision for the locations, times and patterns in which the crimes take place. The ultimate goal is to create a space within which citizens can share information freely about problems happening in their community and officers can learn more about the area and develop a closer working relationship with community members. By getting out into the community together, both parties benefit. Police are seen by other groups of people within the neighborhood, and citizens have a chance to interact more with law enforcement.

Where and when do Community Visits or “Walkalongs” Take Place?

During joint walkalongs, police and citizens can go to hotels, schools, parks, neighborhoods, bazaars, or anywhere else that is crime-prone and doesn’t have regular police presence. In general, it is a good idea to hold visits at a time of day in which citizens will not be put at risk, usually during daylight hours, when many people are around on the streets and crime is least likely to occur. This helps guarantee participants’ physical safety and wellbeing.

What is the Role of Citizens during Community Visits or Walkalongs?

Police alone cannot solve crime. They need the support of citizens who are in the community on a daily basis and have access to information that law enforcement does not. Citizens are in a unique position to serve as the “eyes and ears” of the police, sharing information about the ongoing patterns or trends they observe in the area. This includes:

- Locations where crimes are repeatedly happening.
- Times of day in which crimes are taking place (e.g. during or after business hours, daytime or evening, certain days of the week, etc.).

- Suspicious behavior that might result in crime, such as crowds of young people loitering on the street.
- People that are around and can serve as eye-witnesses when crime happens.

The role of citizens is to simply observe and report on what is taking place in the community. They should not carry or use a stick or firearm, or take the law into their own hands. Crime-related conflict mediation and suspect apprehension is a part of operations and meant only to be done by police.

What is the Role of Police in Identifying the Problems as they arise?

Police can assess the physical surroundings and circumstances in which crimes happen in order to identify their root causes, as well as propose potential solutions. For example, if robberies are continuously taking place in the same location, officers should consider what they can change about the physical environment. It might involve something as simple as cutting back the trees or bushes in a particular area to eliminate places where burglars can hide. This type of assessment is an important tool for taking advantage of the information provided by citizens during joint community visits.

Police should consider assigning one particular officer within their station to serve as the point of contact for citizens participating in the walkalongs. This will enhance citizens' trust and willingness to partner with police.

Who can participate?

Any member of the community who is at least 18 years old and in good standing amongst their fellow community members can participate. It is a good idea to invite citizens from a variety of backgrounds, such as teachers, journalists, religious leader, etc. This diversity of participants will encourage a variety of perspectives and ultimately ensure greater community representation.

What are the Ultimate Benefits of these Visits?

The benefits are numerous. First, by getting out into the community, police gain citizens' trust, respect and support. This makes citizens more willing to partner with law enforcement in solving and stopping crime. Second, citizens become more aware of the problems taking place in the community, the reasons why they are happening and what they can do to prevent them. This helps to make the job of the police easier and more effective. Third, as police performance improves, citizens become even more likely to trust in and support law enforcement efforts, creating a positive cycle of cooperation between police and citizens.

Appendix C: Suggested Guidelines for Community Policing Forums

What is a Community Policing Forum?

A Community Policing Forum (CPF) is a neutral space where citizens and police can come together in partnership to identify and resolve the causes of common crime issues through use of an “action plan”. These plans should be developed, implemented and monitored through a collaborative effort between police and community members, using locally available resources to address any problems identified. CPFs engage the entire community and are inclusive of citizens from diverse groups. They can include but are not limited to business and religious leaders, representatives from the education sector, civil society, political leaders, farmers, and in general men and women who have an interest in serving their community. Most importantly, citizen members of CPFs should be able to effectively represent the needs of the entire community at large.

While a minimum of 30% female membership is suggested; eventually a 50% goal should be reached to ensure full representation of community needs. This goal might be achieved by: (i) designating female representatives in leadership positions, (ii) creating sub-committees to address issues affecting women and (iii) articulating a commitment to gender diversity.

Who is a CPF member?

A CPF member is any adult in good standing in the community that cares about the quality of life in their area. They should be willing to volunteer between two to ten hours each month to raising awareness about crime prevention, as well as support police through information provision or problem-solving sessions.

How is a CPF structured?

At a minimum, CPFs should designate up to three key representatives within the forum. These might include a coordinator or “president” to oversee activities, a secretary to manage minutes and general communication from one meeting to the next, and a treasurer to handle refreshments or other low-cost resources required. In addition, an attempt should be made to rotate CPF leadership at least every one to two years through a transparent election process organized in collaboration with local police and citizens.

Efforts should be made, however, to simplify the internal oversight and hierarchical structure of the forums. The tendency toward complex oversight structures has (including large advisory and working committees), in the past, complicated the ability for CPFs to accomplish anything, and in some cases led to politicization of the CPF due to participants’ interest in securing a leadership role. Instead, forums should focus on creating sub-committees that address specific issues as they arise (e.g. work on identifying solutions to the causes of petty theft, increases in gender-based violence, etc.).

Where and how often should a CPF Meeting be held? How exactly do they Work?

The goal of the CPF meetings is to allow citizens and police to share and follow-up on crime issues taking place in the community, and what is being done to resolve them. CPF meetings should be held in a neutral public setting where no one political party or social organization is dominant, such as a restaurant, school, government office, park, bazaar, or other space conveniently accessible to people. Special emphasis should be placed on holding the meetings at a time of day convenient for most citizens including daytime workers and female members. They have been found to be most effective when held monthly, because this provides enough time between meetings for police and citizens to take steps that move any action plans forward and implement or follow-up on any other pending activities. As much as possible, all citizens should be given a chance to speak that need to, while still managing time appropriately.

What are the Expectations of Citizen CPF Members?

CPFs should not be viewed or used as a means to promote monetary or personal interests. Membership in a CPF is voluntary and there can be no monetary gain made by any participant. CPF members should not be issued uniforms, badges or identification cards. CPF participants should not have any decision making authority or executive power over the police but instead inform and assist police in problem solving community- based issues. CPF members should not act as a security force for the police. In addition, CPF members should not mediate violent crime issues, perform alternative dispute resolution, punish, or try to arrest people, but should instead refer crime victims to the police.

CPF leaders who miss three consecutive meetings should be suspended from their term; however, they can be voted in for another term once the current one expires. If the police are unable to attend a meeting, one CPF member should meet with or call them separately to brief them on what was discussed and request assistance as needed.

What are the Expectations of Police?

As much as possible, police should plan to attend every CPF meeting and/or major activity. It is preferable if the same officer goes to each event to provide continuity to CPF efforts. If they are unable to attend, a police officer must be designated to follow-up on CPF activities by phone or in-person at the police station. The police must work collaboratively with citizens to solve problems, by using their law enforcement expertise to advise community members on crime prevention and resolution. They must also ensure that no individual, group or political party dominates or influences the meetings. The police should also become familiar with the geographic area corresponding to the CPF, preferable through joint walkalongs with CPF members through local bazaars or other potential crime areas.

What is the Role of Awareness Building?

In order for CPFs to be effective, the general public must be aware of them and know how to contact and use the CPF system for help when needed. The public can be educated on meetings and resources through word of mouth, posted flyers, use of megaphones, as well as the local media. Police and CPF leaders are encouraged to find creative ways to build awareness and invite the media to cover CPFs activities and successes.