



The Asia Foundation

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**WORKING POLITICALLY IN PRACTICE SERIES
– CASE STUDY NO. 10 –**



**COMMUNITY POLICING AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE:
WORKING WITH THE POLICE IN SRI LANKA AND TIMOR-LESTE**

October 2016

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OCTOBER 2016

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This paper was funded by UK aid from the UK government. The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies or those of The Asia Foundation

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Foreword

For several decades, The Asia Foundation has been implementing development programs through a highly responsive, politically informed, iterative ‘searching’ model of assistance. Variations of this approach have been an important element in the Foundation’s work going back to its founding in 1954. While each program varies, this model is broadly characterized by a heavy emphasis on contextual knowledge and relationships, combined with multiple small, nuanced, and carefully targeted interventions working closely with local partners. This stands in sharp contrast to the conventional, pre-planned ‘projectized’ approach that has long been the standard in the development industry. Especially in cases where a development problem may seem to be politically intractable, an approach that focuses on building relationships and expanding knowledge of the landscape of interests and influence, while retaining the flexibility to adjust program strategy and tactics as new information or unexpected opportunities become available, is more likely to yield good results.

The Asia Foundation’s Working Politically in Practice Series has allowed the Foundation to share what it has learnt from its efforts to test iterative and politically informed approaches to programming across Asia. This series was initially launched under the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – The Asia Foundation Partnership (DFAT-TAF Partnership), as a way to share learning from The Asia Foundation’s work under the Partnership to trial iterative, politically informed approaches to programming across Asia. More recently, The Asia Foundation has expanded this series to capture lessons from other programs being implemented by The Foundation across the region. This includes support from the UK Government through the Programme Partnership Arrangement which aims to improve state-society relations to support peace and stability in countries and subnational regions affected by protracted conflict and fragility.

This tenth paper in the series, *Community Policing as a Catalyst for Change: Working with the Police in Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste*, explores why community policing has become a popular area of programming, and the opportunities it offers for institutional reform. In post-conflict, post-authoritarian, and high crime environments, community policing is seen as a way to provide security needed for sustainable development. Yet community policing is also an ambiguous concept, meaning many things to different people. Therefore, this paper seeks to set out The Foundation’s distinctive approach to community policing. Drawing on ongoing programs in Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, the Foundation has navigated the high expectations placed on community policing by donors. The paper shows that the Foundation leverages community policing as an entry point into wider policing reforms. Further, the Foundation emphasizes locally led programming and ‘best fit’, rather than ‘best practice’ approaches to reform. This paper also calls the wider community of practice working on community policing to share their own experiences and approaches; how they navigate a complex and ambiguous concept in programming; and what challenges they too have confronted in working towards more responsive and accountable policing.

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Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to The Asia Foundation Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste community policing program teams for taking the time to share their insights and experiences.

This paper has benefited from the feedback and inputs from The Asia Foundation's staff and independent reviewers. The author would like to thank Patrick Barron, Will Bennett, Sarah Dewhurst, Mark Koenig, Bryony Lau, Johann Rebert, Mark Sedra, Craig Valters, and Todd Wassel for helpful comments on earlier versions. Thanks also go to Bryony Lau and Patthiya Tongfueng for providing editorial assistance. Of course, the author is responsible for the views expressed in the paper and any errors or omissions. The views are not attributed to The Asia Foundation or to the UK government, whose financial support is gratefully acknowledged.

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. METHODS	2
3. INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNITY POLICING	3
3.1 What is community policing?	3
3.2 Why do community policing?	4
3.3 Common critiques of international community policing practice	5
4. THE ASIA FOUNDATION'S COMMUNITY POLICING PROGRAMS	6
4.1 Why do community policing: the scope of the challenge	6
4.2 The Asia Foundation's aims, assumptions, and activities	7
4.3 An Asia Foundation approach?	12
5. THE ASIA FOUNDATION WAYS OF WORKING	14
5.1 Program relationships	14
5.2 Staff and organizational culture	16
5.3 Information and knowledge	17
6. REFLECTIONS FROM THE ASIA FOUNDATION EXPERIENCE	19
6.1 Reconciling the ambition of institutional reform with the limits of programming	19
6.2 The line between community policing and police reform	20
6.3 Letting go of state-society relations	21
6.4 Ways of engaging with plural security systems	22
6.5 Potential future directions	22
7. CONCLUSION	24
REFERENCES	26

Acronyms

BHC	British High Commission
CDC	Community Defense Committee
CPC	Community Policing Council
CSC	Community Security Committee
DFID	United Kingdom's Department for International Development
JSRP	Justice and Security Research Programme
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
MFAT	New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PNTL	Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste
RPD	Research and Planning Division
SLPS	Sri Lanka Police Service
SLRC	Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium
SSR	Security Sector Reform
USAID	United States Agency for International Development





1. Introduction

Community policing has become a popular area of programming for aid organizations, aimed at achieving more responsive and citizen-focused policing. In post-conflict, post-authoritarian, and high crime environments, community policing is seen as a way to provide the security needed for sustainable development. Donors and their implementing partners believe building trust between police and those they are mandated to protect offers a way to reduce insecurity, strengthen state-society relations and improve police accountability. Yet community policing is also an ambiguous concept, meaning many things to different people. It is often highly ambitious, overburdened with a range of competing objectives. It can result in the creation of ‘islands of effectiveness’, without fundamentally transforming policing. Within this broader context, this paper showcases The Asia Foundation (the Foundation) approach to community policing, explaining how it navigates these challenges and the factors that have made this approach possible. It also aims to trigger critical engagement with work on community policing both within the Foundation and more broadly on how institutional change within the security sector can happen. This paper is part of wider efforts by the Foundation to take stock of a range of programming in conflict-affected contexts.¹

Community policing has become a key area of programming for the Foundation, with programs in Bangladesh (2004; 2011 – 13), Indonesia (2005 – 2014), Sri Lanka (2009 – ongoing), and Timor-Leste (2008 – ongoing).² Focusing on community policing programs in Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, this paper unpacks the Foundation’s objectives, theories of change and activities (what it does), as well as its ways of working (how it does it). These combine in a distinctive approach to security sector reform, characterized by an overarching emphasis on institutional change.

Foundation staff understand community policing as a concrete and relatively benign entry point into wider political reforms, rather than an end in itself. Ways of working center on locally led partnerships that work with the grain and opt for ‘best fit’ approaches to reform – rather than assuming the universal relevance of ‘best practice’ approaches. Different implementation models are used as appropriate and funding is pieced together as necessary. The Foundation uses community policing to address specific issues of insecurity within communities, thus proving useful to police in their day-to-day work, while also beginning to broach wider institutional issues that affect how policing is delivered. The Foundation has a long-term presence in country and relies on primarily national staff with strong local knowledge who are able to work strategically in a high change environment, adopt a learning disposition, and take a long-term, evolutionary approach to change.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section two sets out the methods used in this paper. Section three recaps some of the literature on community policing, setting out debates about the meaning of the concept and the reasons for which it is undertaken, as well as some of the common critiques of its practice internationally. This illustrates the challenging and deeply political context that the Foundation’s community policing programs must navigate. Section four turns to The Asia Foundation’s rationale for engaging in community policing and what the approaches look like in Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, drawing out commonalities. Section five considers the Foundation’s process-focused ways of working that influence the shape of community policing programming. Finally, section six offers some critical reflections emerging from the Foundation’s experience that are relevant to all those working to transform policing.

1. For other papers, see Denney and Barron (2015); and Valters (2016).
 2. In Bangladesh, The Asia Foundation also ran the Dhaka Metropolitan Police -Youth Cooperation Series project focusing on youth-police activities to promote crime reporting and increase trust in law enforcement agencies (2014-2015), with funding from the American Center of the US Embassy. In Indonesia, The Asia Foundation stopped supporting partners implementing community policing in the field in 2014, but continues to collaborate with the Indonesian Police Academy on classroom teaching of community policing. Other work with the police in Indonesia includes prevention of religious conflict and reducing prison overcrowding. There has also been more limited program engagement with the police in Malaysia, Mongolia and the Philippines and a community policing program is being planned in the Maldives.

2. Methods



This paper is part of the Foundation's efforts to reflect critically on its conflict programming. It builds on a workshop held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in November 2015, involving representatives from The Asia Foundation regional conflict team, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Timor-Leste community policing programs, Sri Lanka Police Service (SLPS), *Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste* (PNTL), donors, as well as international policing experts. This workshop involved presentations on different aspects of the Foundation's community policing programs and helped to identify commonalities and differences in approach

across contexts. Following this, internal program documentation was analyzed and key program personnel were interviewed. The author has worked with the Foundation on its community policing work since 2013 and has previously visited program sites and conducted interviews with police counterparts in Sri Lanka and managed a case study of the Timor-Leste program. Finally, a review of the secondary literature on international experience of community policing also helped to situate the Foundation's experience in the wider field.

3. International experience of community policing

3.1 WHAT IS COMMUNITY POLICING?

Security is widely recognized as the foundation for sustainable development. Investments are less likely to be destroyed and people are able to play an active role in peace and development (World Bank 2011). As a result, international donors are increasingly investing in security sector reform (SSR) (Jackson 2015). SSR variously involves reforms of the military, police, justice sector, prisons, and border guards, as well as the relevant oversight institutions (and increasingly

The ambiguity of community policing can thus prove useful, although its vagueness can also mask important differences in interests, priorities, and goals.

‘non-state’ or ‘non-statutory’ security and justice actors), with the intention of establishing civilian-led security that enforces the rule of law for the benefit and protection of all citizens, not just political elites or other interest groups (OECD 2007; UN 2012). One part of – or one way into – this massive undertaking

to transform security and justice provision is community policing. It has become a popular strategy for development agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), allowing them to work on issues of security in a community-oriented manner that fits with their mandate (Brogden 1999). This growth in community policing is despite, or perhaps in part because, it is ambiguous what community policing is.

If you ask ten people for a definition of community policing, you will get ten different answers (Eck and Rosenbaum 1994: 3-6). For many police services and donors, community policing is about instilling a

community-orientation in the formal police service. For others, community policing is about bringing together a range of policing providers to cooperate on local safety issues or resolve disputes. Still, in other cases, some have described entirely non-state actors who serve a policing function – such as the *sungu sungu*³ in Tanzania – as an example of community policing (Cross 2013). As Ellison and Pino note, “community policing can be transformed chameleon like into whatever its practitioners want it to be” (2012: 71). This ambiguity allows donors, implementing organizations, and police to use the popular community policing nomenclature to cover a range of approaches to policing – including, for instance, non-state policing, zero tolerance policing, intelligence-led policing, and establishing a service mentality within the police. This flexibility can also allow a range of not obvious bed-fellows to be brought together under the broad church of community policing. And indeed, it can appear less threatening and interventionist to police and government counterparts than police or security sector reform, making it a useful entry point. The flexibility can also allow for a range of specific responses to the unique security and justice challenges faced by a given community. The ambiguity of community policing can thus prove useful, although its vagueness can also mask important differences in interests, priorities and goals (Denney 2015).

Sir Robert Peel’s initial articulation in 1829 of community policing emphasized that all police should be community police and that the police are merely “citizens in uniform” (Brogden and Nijhar 2005: 25)⁴ This stems from one of Peel’s principles that “the police are the public and the public are the police” – only that the police have been vested by the community with specific responsibilities for matters of safety and crime (cited in UK Home Office 2012). This definition expresses the important component

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3. *Sungu sungu* was a community justice mechanism established in Tanzania in the early 1980s to protect communities from cattle raiding. It was later endorsed by the Tanzanian government given its success in dealing with this problem. However, it has also come under criticism for using excessive violence to apprehend and punish suspected offenders (Cross 2013).
 4. The Peelian principles summarise the ‘policing by consent’ approach based on ideas about making policing more accountable to the people and forging close police–community relationships, in which police officers are regarded as citizens in uniform (Denney and Jenkins 2013).

of police not being outside of, or separate from, the communities they police, but rather being 'of' society and subject also to its laws in the same way that all citizens are. Yet it can be difficult to operationalize or make concrete this emphasis on policing culture in programming. While projects regularly claim to be working towards transformation of policing culture, more minimalist approaches are often adopted – such as having a community policing unit responsible for public and community relations within the service. In this way, community policing programs can end up as an 'add on' without changing the existing culture of policing or the institution (Stabilisation Unit 2014: 29).

While there is no agreed definition of community policing, there are nonetheless a number of principles that are widely understood to form the central core of the idea. Importantly, these focus on the functions of community policing, rather than the particular institutional forms that community policing should take. These principles include (adapted from Casey 2010; Ferreira 1996; Saferworld 2006):

- Partnership: Focused on the relationship between policing providers and citizens and their cooperative efforts in policing.
- People-centered: Focused on the protection of citizens as well as citizen concerns regarding safety and security.
- Problem-solving: Policing providers and communities work together to solve problems in communities, addressing problems before they become potential drivers of crime.
- Proactive: Policing providers actively engage with communities in order to prevent crime, rather than waiting until crimes have occurred.
- Prevention: As above, focused on preventing crime before it happens, rather than responding after a crime has been committed.

These principles are flexible enough to be applied in many different ways and in different forms but also provide an anchor for an often slippery concept.

3.2 WHY DO COMMUNITY POLICING?

Community policing programs are deployed internationally to meet objectives ranging from reducing crime and insecurity, to improving community-police relations, to strengthening police accountability, to contributing to stronger state-society relations, to enabling improved economic development (for an overview, see Denney and Jenkins 2013). Call suggests that police reform “resembles the famous story of five blind men feeling different parts of an elephant, each man holding an entirely different perception to

the others” (Call 2003: 2). These diverging objectives highlight the high expectations placed on community policing and the challenge that organizations like The Asia Foundation face in operationalizing them. The rationale for the most common objectives ascribed to community policing is briefly unpacked below.

Improve community-police relations

Community policing is often pursued to improve community-police relations. Better quality, regular police communication and outreach with the public, and more respectful and professional behavior, is seen as a way to build a more trusting relationship between the police and the communities they work in. This is especially important in transition contexts where the police have been viewed as dangerous and predatory by parts of the population. This objective is often subsumed into more ambitious objectives – such as reducing crime and insecurity (or perceptions of crime and insecurity) or strengthening state-society relations but can be a major achievement in and of itself.

Reduce crime and insecurity

Citizens, police, governments, and donors (where they are involved), often turn to community policing to reduce crime and insecurity. For the police, better relationships with communities mean they will be more willing to share information, thus enabling officers to prevent and respond to crime. Improving community-police relations is, in this case, instrumental to a wider interest in obtaining information to reduce crime. However, police must also be able to deal effectively with crime when information is provided to them. Simply improving community-police relations is likely to be insufficient without also improving police capacity so that citizens who do report information are not frustrated.

There is a danger here of police pursuing community policing for the purposes of intelligence collection alone (Denney 2013). External actors supporting police in building relationships need to be savvy to their prerogatives for obtaining information given that such purposes fundamentally undermine the trust-building at the heart of community policing. In more authoritarian political contexts, community policing can quickly lose its positive sheen and become a handmaiden to insecurity and injustice.

More broadly, community policing can aim to reduce insecurity by enabling non-violent dispute resolution. This is especially important in post-conflict contexts in which violence can destabilize hard-won peace. Community policing is thus theorized to build trust and confidence amongst citizens to turn to the

police in resolving disputes or dealing with crimes. This may alleviate the need for communities to rely on vigilantism, thereby weakening the rule of law. In practice, communities that have experienced an absence of state policing, for instance due to conflict, are not simply voids of security and justice provision, but have often developed alternative, non-state mechanisms for resolving disputes (Tamanaha 2007). In such cases, the police may not be the most accessible, affordable, or trusted security provider and community policing may thus require working with existing security and justice providers in order to reduce crime and insecurity (Baker 2008).

Strengthen police accountability

A less common but arguably the most important objective, given it goes to the heart of policing culture, is strengthening police accountability. This is most needed – but also most difficult – in authoritarian or transitioning states where the police have been an agent of insecurity, rather than security for the community, or parts of it. It is also relevant when the police wield broad powers, perhaps due to high crime or active conflict. Community policing can be an opportunity to put in place appropriate controls of the police and redress for unprofessional behavior, such as complaints mechanisms and investigations of police misconduct. Accountability is a sensitive issue to broach in police reform given that it is about monitoring conduct and punishing misconduct. It is therefore not an easy starting point for community policing programs. Yet it is vital if the other objectives of community policing are to be fully realized (Denney 2015).

Contribute to stronger state-society relations

Finally, many donors and NGOs support community policing to improve state-society relations, particularly in the aftermath of conflict.⁵ By connecting and building relationships between people and police, as visible representatives of the state, citizen trust in the state will concurrently be built and the social contract strengthened by alleviating the need for alternative security providers. This is an ambitious goal for community policing. It assumes that improved relationships at the local level can aggregate up to improved relationships with the state.

An overview of these objectives demonstrates the high expectations placed on community policing and what it can achieve. In many cases, donors and

government and police counterparts may prioritize objectives differently, adding further complication that implementing organizations must navigate.

3.3 COMMON CRITIQUES OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY POLICING PRACTICE

Several criticisms have been made of international efforts to promote community policing as part of SSR (Baker 2008; Brogden 1999; Ruteere and Pomerolle 2003). Community policing is criticized as a technical exercise, transferring policing know-how from one (usually Western) context to another (Brogden and Nijhar 2005). This overlooks how community policing is also political – shifting power between different actors, extending security to previously excluded groups, altering the nature of policing and whose purposes it serves. It also neglects the importance of context, and how community policing is inevitably influenced by a range of factors, such as the history of state-society relations, legacies of conflict, social inequalities, and cultures of dispute resolution (Denney and Jenkins 2013).

Other criticisms relate to the failure of community policing to transform policing – with many stories of ‘islands of effectiveness’ but ongoing police corruption, brutality and poor performance in spite of millions spent on programming (ICAI 2015; Rao 2013). In some cases, this is attributed to insufficient funding, short timeframes, or deficiencies with what is largely perceived as the right approach (see for instance Bayley 2001). Others criticize the overambitious aims of community policing programs and question more fundamentally whether community policing is the right way to achieve reform (Baker 2008; Brogden 1999).

These critiques raise questions about the validity of technical approaches to SSR that replicate ‘best practices’ without sufficiently accounting for context. ‘Best practice’ approaches that “provide clear blueprints and unambiguous answers” are recognized as more useful for development agencies than for solving the complex and non-linear development challenges like poor quality policing (Ramalingam et al. 2014: 1). For The Asia Foundation, this international experience is a counterpoint to its own approach which seeks to work differently to overcome the shortcomings set out here.

5. A focus on state-society relations emerged from the overlap between peacebuilding and statebuilding and the recognition that effective governance and peace requires “positive, mutually constructive relations” between state and society (Haider 2011: 4).

4. The Asia Foundation's community policing programs

This section first sets out why the Foundation works on community policing in Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste and the challenges of doing so in each country. It then describes the aims, assumptions, and activities of the two country offices in designing and implementing their programs, highlighting how they navigate the ambitious objectives and pitfalls of community policing set out above. The commonalities between the countries are emphasized, capturing the Foundation's approach to community policing.

4.1 WHY DO COMMUNITY POLICING: THE SCOPE OF THE CHALLENGE

The Asia Foundation's work on community policing emerges out of its programming on conflict, governance, and law, recognizing how poor quality, exclusionary, or violent policing can hold back the realization of rights and development.

Foundation staff recognize that in post-conflict settings, where the role, make-up, and identity of the police can be in flux, there are limits to what community policing can achieve. For this reason, Foundation staff perceive their programs as insufficient on their own to transform safety and security, but nonetheless as one institutional reform process that can deliver modest but important improvements for citizen security and justice, and help catalyze wider security and governance reforms. Indeed, in some countries the Foundation has opted not to support community policing, recognizing that it is not the appropriate entry point for change.

Staff also appreciate that their ability to transform the policing culture in the countries where they work is not unbounded and that internationally sponsored reforms are just one factor amongst many influencing policing. Recognizing this, the Foundation opts to work in particular ways, with a strong emphasis on local ownership (discussed in section five), with

community policing used as a strategic entry point. This can mean that change happens slowly – but the Foundation's approach ensures it is led by individuals within the police institutions themselves.

Sri Lanka

Policing in Sri Lanka is influenced by colonialism and 26 years of civil war that only ended in 2009. During the conflict, responsibility for security in the Tamil-majority North was dominated by the military, with police playing a supportive counter-terrorism role. In 2004, the SLPS was moved under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence, giving the police a more militarized orientation. Police recruitment expanded dramatically to respond to threats posed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), with reduced training periods to enable rapid deployment. Police recruits were

It also emphasizes a more democratic orientation: responding to people's needs, rather than maintaining order.

overwhelmingly from the dominant Sinhalese ethnic group. At the end of the conflict, Sri Lanka had a police force numbering 84,000, of which less than 0.5 percent were Tamil (Chambers et al. 2014: 3). With 68 percent of the SLPS recruited during the war years, many had never experienced peacetime policing and had received training focused primarily on responding to a terrorist threat emerging from the population (Ibid: 2). This did little to foster positive community-police relations, particularly in the North and East where Tamils and Muslims are concentrated and where the conflict was centered. It also led to the steady erosion of policing skills and abilities throughout the SLPS, leading to weaker policing.

Policing has been slow to change in post-conflict Sri Lanka, with the trajectory of the police intimately connected to politics. In 2014, only 36 percent

nationwide were very confident in the police, and just 16 percent in the North and East (The Asia Foundation 2015d: 3). Centralized political power and influence over the police have limited the space for reform, although opportunities have begun to emerge. The police were moved from the Ministry of Defence to the Ministry of Law and Order in 2013, signaling a shift in orientation. The new government, elected in January 2015, has opened up conversations about reconciliation and police reform that may improve community-police relations not just in the North and East, but country-wide. With terrorism no longer the primary preoccupation, policing has shifted its focus towards the kinds of criminal activities that communities commonly confront, including theft, assault, and property-related offenses. This is thus a time of potentially significant transition within the SLPS.

Timor-Leste

The PNTL came into being in 2000, following a referendum in which Timor-Leste voted for independence following 24 years of Indonesian occupation, preceded by Portuguese colonial rule. Policing during occupation was highly militarized and focused on control and intelligence gathering. At independence, recruitment for PNTL drew on those who had served in the Indonesian police, as well as new recruits, meaning the institution carried with it the legacy of policing under Indonesian occupation (Peake 2009a: 150-1). Fractures within the security sector rooted in resistance-era rivalries came to the fore in 2006. A political-military crisis saw violence erupt between elements of the security sector and civilians; a group of soldiers from Western districts petitioned the government about their perceived inequitable treatment vis-à-vis Easterners. The crisis stirred divisions between Eastern and Western regions of Timor-Leste. It resulted in 37 deaths within four months, 2,000 homes destroyed and over 100,000 people displaced (Peake 2009b: 2013). More broadly, it demonstrated the continued weakness of the country's newly established police service and the shortcomings of significant levels of international support to date (Wassel 2014).

The PNTL has been the subject of much training and reform delivered by the international community. This assistance, however well intentioned, was in some cases antithetical to the principles of community policing (focused more on hard security) and often overwhelmed a police service still in its infancy. It resulted in an "initially institutionally hollow form of

community policing" (Wassel 2014: 4). It is only since many of the international reform programs have ended that PNTL has developed its own understanding of community policing.

While decentralization is a government priority, political power remains highly centralized in Timor-Leste, making it difficult to devolve authority to local police. Yet 75 percent of Timorese live in rural areas with limited infrastructure, meaning many people exist at a remove from state services, including policing. Most Timorese continue to rely on customary actors to resolve disputes, who tend to prioritize social stability over individual rights, which can pose problems for marginalized groups (The Asia Foundation 2012b: 12). Where safety and security depend on local leaders, patronage, and personal relationships can play a determining role in justice outcomes. There is also a history of weak interaction between the police and customary actors, with neither seen to meet the safety and security needs of citizens. Indeed, in 2008 50 percent of citizens surveyed reported being 'very concerned' about safety and a further 24 percent reported being 'somewhat concerned' (The Asia Foundation 2013b: 11). While this had improved by 2015, when 37 percent reported being 'very concerned' and 14 percent 'somewhat concerned', it nonetheless underlines the need for improved security strategies (The Asia Foundation 2015a: 26).

4.2 THE ASIA FOUNDATION'S AIMS, ASSUMPTIONS, AND ACTIVITIES

In Timor-Leste and Sri Lanka, the Foundation has used community policing with two overarching objectives. First, and quite overtly in its theories of change, the Foundation has focused on improving people's security and stability in partnership with the police. This has been a priority of government and police counterparts, as well as development partners interested in providing a foundation for wider development progress. Second, the Foundation has used community policing as an entry point into wider institutional transformation to more democratic, responsive, and accountable policing, although not always as an overt strategy. Staff point to the latter as key, yet have not always been able – for reasons discussed below – to put it front and center in programming. This is especially the case in Sri Lanka where the political space has been more constrained. These two overarching objectives emerge clearly in the approaches to community policing adopted by each of the country teams, and their evolution over time.

Sri Lanka

The Sri Lanka office started a community policing program in 2009 with funding from the British High Commission (BHC). This focused on training police officers in Tamil language skills⁶ to improve their ability to communicate with locals in the war-affected areas of the North and East, where community-police relations were particularly poor. The office then ran community policing pilots from 2009 to 2011 in two districts, which demonstrated improvements in perceptions of security, police performance, and community-police relations. Perception surveys undertaken before and after the pilots showed an increase in respondents feeling 'very safe' from 23 percent to 59 percent in Kandy and from 20 percent to 39 percent in Moneragala (The Asia Foundation 2012a). Of course, it is important to note that between 2009 and 2011 the war in Sri Lanka came to an end (in May 2009), and this will have influenced feelings of safety. Improvements were also apparent in perceptions of the relationship between communities and police: in Kandy 79 percent in 2011 compared to 57 percent in 2009; and 83 percent in Moneragala compared to 49 percent in 2009 (Ibid.). The program was rolled out in the North and East from 2012, funded by the BHC and DFID through a Programme Partnership Arrangement with The Asia Foundation regional office in Bangkok (approximately USD 3.4 million funded by BHC from 2009 to 2015, and USD 1 million funded by DFID from 2010 to 2015).

The Sri Lanka office's theory of change from 2012 to 2016 was called the 'police-community collaboration theory', which set out the following logic:

By supporting police and communities in the North and East to increase the frequency and quality of interactions and collaborate in finding solutions to local safety and security problems, there will be a gradual reduction in tensions between local communities and police, as well as improved safety and security environments (The Asia Foundation 2012a).

In 2015, 'reduction in tensions' was replaced with 'normalization of relations' in order to capture changes since the end of the war. The focus moved from reducing friction between police and communities in the immediate post-conflict period, to normalizing relationships under peacetime (The Asia Foundation 2015b). The ultimate impact, mentioned in program documentation only briefly, was improvements in state-society relations necessary for sustainable peace and security. The aim was to ensure post-conflict stability by improving local safety and deepening

the community-orientation of the SLPS, measured by improvements in people's perceptions of police, greater comfort when visiting a police station, greater numbers of complaints recorded at police stations in Tamil, and police perceived as more responsive to community complaints.

The overarching theory of change relied on five sub-theories or assumptions (The Asia Foundation 2012a):

Sub-theory 1. Community policing forums serve as platforms for positive engagement: If community policing forums meet regularly, they will serve as effective platforms for communication and planning for collaboration. If effective, these efforts will improve trust in the police and positive perceptions of police performance beyond those directly participating in the forums.

Sub-theory 2. Community policing serves as a catalyst for police transitions to peacetime security: If community policing strategies are introduced in the North and East, they will increase the rate at which the police shift from a security-oriented force to a police service focused on meeting public needs.

Sub-theory 3. Community-police collaboration produces more effective solutions to local safety and security concerns: If police, communities, and local government actors effectively work together to carry out problem analysis on local safety and security challenges, and develop collaborative solutions to those challenges, there will be improvements in the local safety and security environment.

Sub-theory 4. Engagement increases police accountability to local communities: If the police engage with local civilian actors in the community more regularly and build stronger relationships, the police will be more responsive and accountable to the community.

Sub-theory 5. Perceptions of the police contribute to overall perceptions of the state: If community perceptions of the police improve, there will be a corresponding improvement in perceptions of state performance and a reduction in feelings of grievance towards the state.

These sub-theories reflect and extend some of the common objectives of community policing internationally, as in section three. Sub-theory 1 focuses on improving community-police relations;

6. Language training had previously been conducted under an access to justice program since 2006.

sub-theory 3 aims to reduce crime and insecurity; sub-theory 4 emphasizes strengthening police accountability, and sub-theory 5 suggests improved state-society relations. Yet sub-theory 3 deepens the common objective of 'reduce crime and insecurity' by honing in on solving particular local safety and security concerns; it aims explicitly for police to respond to the needs and problems faced by particular communities. In addition, sub-theory 2 introduces a more unique objective around facilitating the transition from wartime to peacetime policing. This hints at the overarching institutional change objective that can be seen across the Foundation's community policing programs. It also emphasizes a more democratic orientation: responding to people's needs, rather than maintaining order.

The Sri Lanka office acknowledges the need for change within the SLPS in order to achieve sustained stability in the country. The program works at structural, institutional, and community levels, supporting implementation of community policing at police stations, strengthening reforms and building

Such an approach aims to avoid the pitfalls of either top-down or bottom-up approaches by connecting both.

capacity at the institutional level, and achieving cultural transformations at the community level (The Asia Foundation 2013a: 11). From 2012-2014, the project focused on expanding coverage to ensure community policing practices were not just creating islands of effectiveness. However,

in the final year of implementation, focus shifted to establishing a smaller number of model police stations and community-police forums (known as Community Security Committees, CSCs) to deepen community policing practice. This was described as a "cost-effective and sustainable institutionalization process, and enables endorsement and support from senior management in the police that can be replicated throughout the police service" (The Asia Foundation 2015b: 1). It also responded to difficulties of frequent police transfers obstructing the institutionalization of community policing at so many sites. The Foundation advocated to limit transfers in the model police station sites so greater progress can be made in these locations, and highlighted to the SLPS more widely.

When operationalized, this theory of change translates into four main sets of activities. First, Tamil language training was provided for SLPS officers to increase the number of police who can converse in the dominant language in the North and East.

Second, community policing practices were supported in 32 police stations in the North and East. This involved adapting CSCs as forums where police and appointed community representatives could discuss local safety and security concerns and jointly problem-solve. The CSCs were not an entirely new creation and built off the previously existing Community Defense Committees (CDCs) set up during the war as avenues for citizens to pass on information about potential armed attacks against local communities or suspicious activity related to multiple bomb attacks against 'soft' civilian targets. The CSCs became the main forum for SLPS engagement at the community level. The Foundation thus drew on and transformed the original purpose of the CDCs. This tapped a known and widely understood mechanism but also risked linking the CSCs to a forum for wartime surveillance. This is one example of the Foundation's 'best fit' approach to programming – the CDCs are not necessarily the ideal forum to deliver accountable, responsive, and friendly policing but program staff opted pragmatically to work with what existed and transform the forums. Other community policing activities included regular patrolling and bicycle patrolling, as well as complaints boxes to provide an avenue for community complaints against police.

Third, the Foundation developed a 'how to' community policing manual and video and collaborated with the Police Academy to train new recruits and junior-level officers in community policing. Training has also been delivered on prevention of torture and investigation of miscellaneous complaints (a broad category in Sri Lanka). Fourth, the Foundation has supported the Research and Planning Division (RPD) of the SLPS to design and undertake quantitative and qualitative research to inform police reform. An independent research firm was contracted to train RPD staff; they have now conducted surveys and research on community perceptions and interactions with the police, providing "information that is critical to planning, implementing, and articulating the need for institutional reforms" and promotes more evidence-based policy (The Asia Foundation 2012 a: 54). More recently, in 2015, the Foundation has worked at the station level to strengthen referrals pathways on sensitive responses to gender-based violence, recognizing the high rates that the country faces.

The Sri Lanka office reports improvements in perceptions of community-police relations, greater comfort when visiting police stations and some improvements in perceptions of safety – although this was dented somewhat in 2014 due to concerns of the Muslim community following anti-Muslim riots in parts of the South. In the East, 79 percent of respondents

characterized police-community relations as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ in 2015, compared with 59 percent in 2014. And in the North, 24 percent of people felt ‘very safe’ in 2015, compared to 16 percent in 2014 (SLPS and The Asia Foundation 2015). Helping to facilitate these improvements, 4,567 police have been trained in Tamil language, with the SLPS reporting that one fifth of officers stationed in the North can now speak Tamil (despite only 12 percent of officers stationed there being Tamil) (The Asia Foundation 2015b: 5). The program team notes, however, that perceptions of police have not improved to expected levels, highlighting how change is non-linear and that community policing programs are just one of multiple influences (The Asia Foundation 2015b: 29). The election of a more moderate president in 2015 bodes well for post-conflict stability and is likely to lead to greater space for reform within the police.

Timor-Leste

In contrast with Sri Lanka, community policing was a relatively crowded field in Timor-Leste when the Foundation first got involved in 2008. Community policing had been a component of wider police reform by the United Nations, Australian Aid Program, New Zealand Aid, and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency. From 2008 to 2010, the Foundation ran a pilot funded by USAID (USD 600,000) to set up Community Policing Councils (CPCs) in two districts. Following a one-year gap in programming, further funding was secured from USAID (USD 2.9 million), New Zealand’s MFAT (USD 1.5 million), and DFID (USD 1.25 million) through a Programme Partnership Arrangement for community policing activities from 2012 – 2016.

The theory of change relied on across the four years (although it was only explicitly set out in DFID reporting, and later added to the USAID-MFAT program documents) was termed the ‘community security practice theory’ and claimed that:

Establishing active state-community security models at the *suku* [village] level and building those examples into institutional reforms to develop proactive safety and security approaches, will contribute to strengthened state-society relations and a more stable environment in Timor-Leste.

The aim, therefore, was to improve state-society relations and stability in Timor-Leste by achieving institutional change within the police (PNTL) through uptake of community policing practices. This overarching theory of change relied on three sub-theories or assumptions set out by the team as:

Sub-theory 1. Collaborative security: If we establish space and mechanisms for cooperation between law enforcement and leaders at the local level, then they can be led through a series of steps to jointly provide effective security from which practical experience-based community policing results can be integrated into higher institutional reforms.

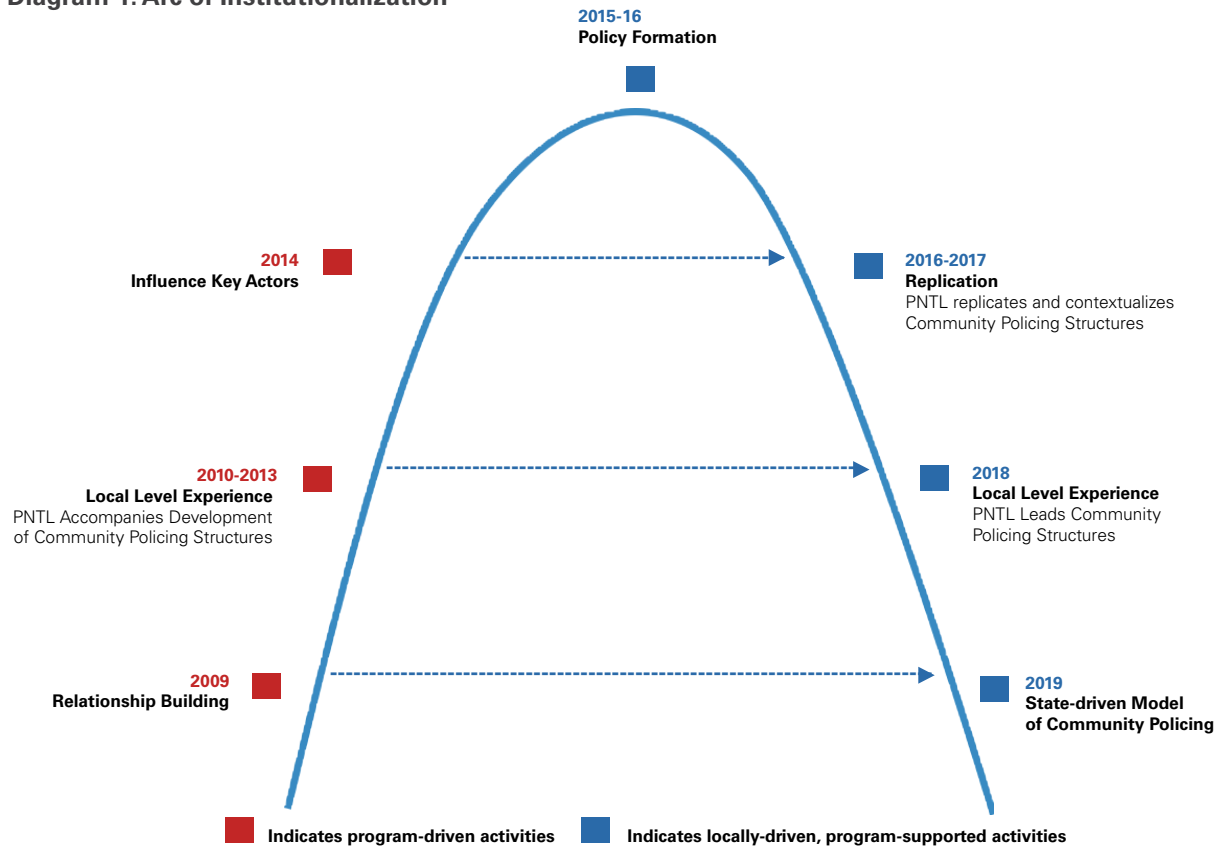
Sub-theory 2. Key actors: If we can connect verifiable community policing results to higher level security and political actors, as well as reform initiatives, policies will be adopted which support community-level cooperation and community-oriented security.

Sub-theory 3. If we can connect collaborative security results with expectations by the wider population through the media and outreach, the political environment will become more conducive for adopting institutional reforms, as well as changing practical responses by PNTL officers working at the community level.

Here again, these reflect the common community policing objectives set out in section three, but develop them further. The establishment of ‘effective state-community security models’ and discussions of cooperation align with the objective of improved community-police relations. Similar to Sri Lanka, reduced crime and insecurity is understood as taking a problem-solving approach to community safety and security needs. Strengthened state-society relations are also apparent in the theory of change. Yet the other sub-theories emphasize much more strongly than the common objectives how community policing can facilitate wider institutional transformation in the police.

Foundation staff described it, they were thus “engaging on different levels to seek multiple paths towards the proliferation of community policing reforms throughout Timor-Leste” (The Asia Foundation 2012b). Efforts focused, first, on building a model of interaction between communities and the PNTL that could help to solve local safety and security problems (with a strong focus on the role of local leaders given their widespread popularity and authority), and then on getting ownership and uptake of that model within the PNTL. Community policing would therefore become self-sustaining without donor funds or Foundation involvement. This is captured in the ‘arc of institutionalization’, developed by the program to depict the change process.

Diagram 1: Arc of Institutionalization



Such an approach aims to avoid the pitfalls of either top-down or bottom-up approaches by connecting both. It recognizes the need to start at the local level to deal with insecurity, while acknowledging that bottom-up approaches alone risk creating islands of effectiveness within a dysfunctional police service. In practice, this meant that the first three years of programming focused primarily on developing and refining the model of interaction at the community level, with the latter three years focused on institutionalizing this model within the PNTL (although the division was not quite this neat).

Activities involved setting up and supporting monthly meetings of the CPCs. Over the life of the program these expanded from just 18 CPCs in two districts in 2010 to 123 in 11 districts (now known as municipalities) in 2015. CPC leaders and PNTL representatives have been trained in how to run the CPC meetings and the Foundation has provided 100 security grants to CPCs to support campaigns and activities to address security challenges in their communities, such as land disputes and domestic violence. The Foundation has also been involved in training *suku* police officers, providing support to the National Community Policing Unit within PNTL and facilitating study tours with the Sri Lankan Police Service. District Steering Committees (later called Municipal Security Councils) were set up as multi-stakeholder quarterly meetings bringing

together police, government, civil society, and village representatives to review safety and security issues across the district and oversee the work of the CPCs operating within the district. Initially started as a project oversight mechanism, these were expanded to fulfil more of a coordination and information sharing function once the value of coming together on a regular basis was demonstrated.

As the Foundation came to appreciate the extent of domestic violence cases throughout Timor-Leste and the tendency for these to be mediated, rather than pursued through the formal justice system, training was provided to CPCs on how to appropriately deal with these matters. The aim was to get more cases into the formal justice system where survivors could benefit from protection and services such as safe houses, and achieve more prosecutions. Other activities included awareness raising, such as a regular radio program on policing matters and outreach with community and religious leaders and youth on a range of issues – from the role of different police units with respect to community policing to domestic violence to electoral violence. The Timor-Leste office also invested in research – conducting internal evaluations, baselines, and wider research on policy and wider contextual issues to monitor progress and learn about the actual impacts of programming.

Over the life of the program, community policing certainly became a stronger focus of the PNTL. While there had been a dedicated unit in headquarters and community policing was stated as an overarching philosophy of the PNTL in the 2009 Organic Law, community policing nonetheless received no budget at the local level and competed with more militarized policing approaches. In 2012, the PNTL included community policing principles in their Strategic Plan (Visibility, Involvement, and Professionalism) and CPCs were included in PNTL Annual Action Plans, indicating their support for community policing. In 2015, the CPCs were also listed as a necessary activity in PNTL's Community Policing Model. The Foundation helped secure a bigger budget for community policing by inviting a presidential security advisor to a presentation of community policing activities and results delivered by district commanders. The security advisor then arranged for a district commanders to present to the president who, on learning that there was no budget specifically allocated for community policing activities in the districts, authorized a supplementary budget of USD 200,000 in 2014. The following year this was adopted into the PNTL's own budget.

The Foundation is also working with the PNTL to develop their standard operating procedures for *suku* police officers, CPCs and Municipal Security Councils. Finally, in early 2015, the general commander of the PNTL approved a community policing model for Timor-Leste, which should assist improved institutionalization within PNTL. The Foundation prepared a draft model, revising it following engagement with the PNTL. Following further refinements by the PNTL, this became what is now the PNTL's community policing model.

Foundation surveys indicate that citizens are now more likely to report matters to the police – with 56 percent going to the police in case of a crime in 2015; compared to just 13 percent who reported doing so in 2008. And while 73 percent of community members reported feeling somewhat or very concerned about security in 2008; 51 percent felt the same way in 2015 (The Asia Foundation 2015a: 37; 57).

4.3 AN ASIA FOUNDATION APPROACH?

While the two country programs are clearly distinct, it is also possible to discern some commonalities that might be said to characterize an 'Asia Foundation approach' to community policing. These include: the overarching objectives (and how these are balanced); the institutional engagement with police;

and the distinctive governance approach that is the Foundation's point of departure for its community policing work.

The country offices cover a range of objectives in their theories and sub-theories of change. Yet in both, the dominant 'theories in use' relate to institutional reform and peace and stability. Both programs underplay, in practice, the emphasis on state-society relations although these are in their theories of change as a key objective. Program staff note that this goal does not really feature in their minds in implementation. Foundation staff indicate this objective was included to respond to donor funding frameworks, rather than emerging from the programs as relevant to the countries in question. This reveals the power that donor policy rhetoric can have on what gets included in formal designs and reporting; and at the same time the power that implementing staff have to pick and choose what ultimately gets the most attention and emphasis in practice. Foundation staff highlight that they focus more on what they feel there is most space and momentum for amongst counterparts – pointing to the importance of taking advantage of openings and opportunities in an otherwise challenging context.

Peace and stability is another overarching objective across both country programs – a prerogative that is in the interests of police and government counterparts as well as donors and implementing organizations keen to see development dividends. Yet rather than focus on metrics of reduced crime or insecurity, the Foundation has emphasized finding solutions and making police responsive to local safety and security needs. While the Foundation uses community-police forums to achieve this – which are perhaps the most ubiquitous community policing activity across many contexts – program staff view them instrumentally as a trigger for discussion about locally defined safety and security problems, and how police and communities might jointly address them.

Foundation program staff, however, say the most important objective is institutional change in the police. This is quite explicit in Timor-Leste but less so in Sri Lanka, given the more limited political space for talking openly about police reform (although space for this is now increasing, as noted above). Even in Timor-Leste, Foundation staff are careful in communicating this objective to donors and even more so with counterparts. There was a danger of over-promising on an unrealistic objective that could not be met in the short timeframes of donor funding cycles. For this reason, institutional transformation of the police does

not appear in the project documentation for all donors, as staff felt that the more rigid reporting requirements of some donors were not suited to such a long-term and complex goal. Nonetheless, Foundation staff are clear that institutional reform is the long-term goal and that community policing must drive towards this and not become an end in itself. In this way, community policing is The Asia Foundation's entry point into wider institutional change necessary to genuinely transform policing. One staff member from Timor-Leste spoke of this as a 'Trojan Horse approach' – whereby community policing is the acceptable and relatively benign face of programming that, underneath, has the additional more ambitious aim of fundamental reform. This is perhaps most apparent in the 'arc of institutionalization' that focuses on using a community policing model as the impetus for wider changes in policing. Here, the flexibility inherent in the concept of community policing mentioned earlier emerges as useful in enabling the Foundation to pursue its ultimate goal in a non-threatening manner.

Because of this overarching objective of institutional change, Foundation community policing activities focus heavily on the police as an institution. While there is significant work with communities and local civil society, the police are the primary counterpart in both Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. This is distinct from other NGOs working on community policing that adopt a more community engagement focus, and work with the police itself much less. Given The Asia Foundation's ultimate goal of institutional change within the police,

program staff believe it is critical to work with the institution itself in order to build understanding of community policing principles, change attitudes and behaviors, and embed such changes. Such processes of institutional change could not be achieved working outside of the police.

This approach, in which community policing is the catalyst for wider reforms, is possible in part because of the governance lens that the Foundation takes to its work. The Foundation is not – nor is it known for being – a peace and security organization. Community policing is not its natural area of programming, with a much stronger focus on wider governance and economic development issues. This governance lens means the Foundation can selectively choose when and where to get involved in community policing if useful for wider political reforms, but also because it means community policing is understood as a political reform strategy. Foundation staff do not think of it as a technical policing matter (although technical policing expertise is at times required). Rather, it is a process of institutional change that is inherently political, in the same way that other governance reform efforts are. Recognizing it as such, both community policing programs engage broadly within the Timor-Leste and Sri Lanka police services at senior and middle management and station levels to build the momentum for change. The governance lens therefore supports Foundation staff to treat community policing as a process of institutional reform and not merely as a local peace and security initiative.

5. The Asia Foundation ways of working

Building an understanding of The Asia Foundation approach to community policing requires more than considering its theories of change, goals, and activities. It also requires an understanding of staff ways of working – how they go about doing the things set out in section four. This section therefore focuses on the process of how the Foundation carries out its community policing work. This is similar to other areas of Foundation programming and may share some likenesses with other organizations working on community policing. Yet an examination of program relationships, staff and organizational culture, and the use of information and knowledge depicts a distinctive way of working that others running community policing programs may be able to learn from.

5.1 PROGRAM RELATIONSHIPS

The nature of the relationships that characterize the Foundation's community policing programs are central to its ways of working. Below, partnerships with police and funding relationships with donors are examined, highlighting a strongly relationship-focused approach that emphasizes locally led reforms and that uses different funding and operational modalities strategically.

Locally led partnerships

The most evident characteristic of the Foundation's community policing programs is that they are locally led partnerships. Staff spoke about 'driving from the backseat' and taking a low profile to allow police counterparts to lead and take credit for reforms. While the Foundation supports a large amount of training – as is common in many community policing programs – staff do not run the training themselves, but rather support local police to do so. Similarly, what training is determined by partners, to guard against multiple donors providing community policing, human rights, and gender training. In Sri Lanka, for instance, this led to training in investigations of miscellaneous offenses. Allowing local actors to take credit also needs flexibility on issues such as branding, so that the Foundation could assist in drafting and producing publications, manuals, and community policing models that were owned by its policing partners.

The Foundation's programs align with government and police plans and find areas where interests converge on less controversial issues in order to build trust over time to work on more sensitive issues. This was apparent in both cases discussed here. In Sri Lanka, the Foundation initially engaged the SLPS on Tamil language training and over time this has enabled the Foundation to move into community policing pilots, community policing training for all recruits, and support to the RPD. Similarly, in Timor-Leste, starting small with pilots in just two locations to test PNTL's appetite for community policing eventually led to a program covering 11 of the country's 13 districts (soon to be all 13).

The challenge of partnering with the police should not be underplayed. The police are not a natural partner for most NGOs and can bring a degree of reputational risk to the NGO itself.

The Foundation's programs align with government and police plans and find areas where interests converge on less controversial issues in order to build trust over time to work on more sensitive issues.

In Sri Lanka, until very recently, it was highly unusual for an NGO to have an ongoing partnership with the SLPS and this required careful and considered engagement, as well as maintaining a low profile. Since the political context has opened up from early 2015, the Foundation is now able to more visibly work with the police. Another

complication of locally led partnerships is the need to maintain relationships with both the police and their responsible ministry; there are multiple partners to get on board with program plans. Ensuring that the Foundation maintains good relationships with the police and the ministry, while navigating the dynamics between the two as well, is critical to protecting the space in which it operates.

Maintaining a program that is locally led can be further complicated by the high levels of staff turnover that

characterize many police services. In both Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, program staff contend with frequent police transfers that mean having to build and re-build relationships with counterparts quickly in order to maintain ownership and momentum. While transfers spread experience of community policing across the police service, they also have the potential to undermine progress in implementation. As a result, program staff engage the police broadly at senior, middle management and junior levels so that they do not become heavily dependent on particular relationships. Similar to transfers, this disperses community policing knowledge across different levels of the police.

Supporting locally led change does, of course, tend to mean moving more slowly, and making more modest and incremental efforts that do not overtly challenge the status quo. This is not to suggest that change does not happen – but rather that it happens more subtly by ‘working with the grain’, as one Foundation staff member cited, to find entry points where there is less institutional resistance. It is also a sector in which it takes significant time to permeate the secrecy surrounding national security issues; adopting a partnership approach is key to having the relationships in place to take advantage of moments of potential change when they arise. In Sri Lanka, for instance, it took the Foundation two to three years of quiet engagement to build relationships to the point that the SLPS now approaches the Foundation to ask for assistance. This highlights how working in these ways is not necessarily in the category of ‘quick wins’ and policy fixes. Rather, it is ‘slow drip’ change, as described at the Colombo workshop. This requires, as is discussed in more detail below, patience, long-term commitments, and results frameworks that are savvy to that. It contrasts with the introduction (or imposition) of foreign models brought by international policing experts that expect rapid implementation and results. Of course, change can also happen quickly – in some cases quite unexpectedly (a new government is elected, a key counterpart is moved, a new policy directive emerges). This requires teams to be agile enough to respond and adapt when such changes do happen, but to be prepared for the long haul in terms of institutional reforms.

Best fit not best practice

Foundation staff are willing to work with the political and institutional realities they are confronted with, rather than to seek to implement ‘best practice’ based on international experience. This is apparent in the Timor-Leste program’s active engagement with

hybrid security and justice. Indeed, the CPCs are being merged into the *suku* councils (so that the CPCs are one aspect of the councils’ work), so they will be attached to a functioning, legitimate institution that can help to assure their sustainability and relevance. Similarly, in Sri Lanka, the CSCs were established by transforming the CDCs, established during wartime to funnel intelligence to security forces. In many ways, this is not an ideal legacy for community policing but it was nonetheless a known and (in some places) established forum to build off. In both cases, the Foundation focuses on how community policing can function most appropriately in a given context, rather than draw on a particular pre-determined form that ‘ideal’ community policing practices should adopt.

Flexible and conventional donor funding relationships

Flexible funding relationships are important for politically smart, locally led, and adaptive development programming (see for instance Booth and Unsworth 2014). Yet in Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, community policing programs have combined conventional and more flexible donor funding modalities. In Timor-Leste, funding has been provided by USAID, MFAT, and DFID. In Sri Lanka, funding has been by way of the BHC and DFID.

In both countries, the DFID funding, through a wider Program Partnership Arrangement with The Asia Foundation regional office, has constituted the smallest portion of funding by some margin but has been the most flexible (not tied to specified outputs or modalities) and put towards different uses. In Timor-Leste, DFID funding has been used primarily to conduct research and internal evaluations to inform programming and encourage learning. This research has triggered some of the changes in programming – such as the decision to link the CPCs to the existing *suku* councils, as these already receive state funding and therefore offered greater potential for sustainability. In Timor-Leste, flexibility in donor funding has perhaps been less important than ensuring that donors understand and accommodate the need for flexibility in capturing the kinds of changes community policing is trying to promote. Flexible funding modalities can help but are perhaps not as important as wider donor comprehension of more flexible ways of working. In Sri Lanka, where the community policing program has a smaller budget overall, the DFID funding has been used to supplement funding for programming activities and has enabled continuity when BHC funding has required re-applications. Yet the Sri Lanka program has not encountered challenges in the flexibility of

their funding; staff can reassess their activities each year and adapt programming accordingly. Overall, the Foundation has implemented community policing with relatively conventional funding arrangements without being constrained in what the programs could do. More important than the funding arrangements is the degree to which donors appreciate the challenges of working on community policing in post-conflict contexts and temper their expectations of results.

5.2 STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The Foundation's community policing work is shaped by the dispositions and modes of operation of its staff, as well as the organizational culture that is cultivated.

Long-term presence of local staff with good local knowledge

The Foundation benefits considerably from having longstanding presence in most of the countries where it works. It has been present in Sri Lanka since 1954 and Timor-Leste since 2000 (with some previous engagement through the Indonesia office from 1992). In addition, country offices are staffed primarily by local citizens. In Sri Lanka, the entire community policing program (and most in the country office) is Sri Lankan. In Timor-Leste, the community policing program is made up of Timorese nationals and one international manager, who has lived in Timor-Leste for several years and is fluent in Tetun. The previous program manager (also an international) has now become deputy country representative in Timor-Leste, ensuring some degree of continuity across the life of the program. This staffing orientation makes a significant difference both in the understanding staff have of the local context, as well as the manner in which Foundation programming is received by government and policing counterparts. As nationals engrained in the culture and politics that programs are engaging, local staff are acutely aware of the importance of context in driving programming. They are also more likely to have established networks and contacts that can assist in building relationships and finding in-roads into counterpart institutions – although this raises the issue of whether relationships are personalized (between a particular staff member and counterparts) or institutionalized (between the Foundation and counterparts). Further, when local staff attend meetings and represent the Foundation, they are less likely to be perceived as foreigners bringing solutions from outside. This is important in building ownership of community policing programming.

The long-term presence of the Foundation in country also allows it to build enduring and therefore deeper relationships with counterparts than is often the case for aid organizations whose international staff rotate regularly. Even in the Timor-Leste office where the

manager is an expatriate, local staff play substantive roles representing the program and the Foundation at high-level meetings – they are not playing purely supportive roles in the background. Being a long-term partner obviously helps to build trust and open up opportunities that those with shorter-term engagements are not likely to have. In Sri Lanka, the Foundation's longer engagement with the police has meant that they are now seen as a 'first mover', while other organizations only began to work on policing once the political climate opened up in 2015. This has led to the Foundation informally engaging and coordinating other donors and civil society as more actors have started working in the policing space.

Staff work strategically in high change environments

The value of long-term, locally engaged staff is especially apparent in the high change environment that characterizes post-conflict policing. Foundation staff must contend with changes in government, new laws, responsibility for policing moving between ministries, and frequent police transfers. Staff must be able to keep up, and having good local knowledge and long-term relationships is immensely helpful. The Sri Lanka program, for instance, has experienced police officers that they have worked with previously in other parts of the SLPS being transferred into counterpart positions elsewhere in the country, easing the transition.

Faced with such unpredictability, staff must work strategically to ensure the program stays on course. In Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, this involves regular horizon scanning to identify who is likely to be influential or in leadership positions in future so the Foundation can begin to build relationships with them in advance. One challenge is how to push for institutional change when working through highly personalized relationships. Due to frequent transfers, it is not uncommon for an important counterpart you have been developing a relationship with to all of a sudden be replaced. Working through such personalized relationships thus carries risk. The Foundation teams have managed this in two ways. First, by regularly assessing and discussing the political economy and anticipating who is being groomed for which positions and who has fallen out of favor and what that may mean. This provides staff with a basis for deciding whom to build relationships with – including, at times, difficult characters not necessarily supportive of programming but who may end up in a powerful position. Second, relationship building is also done broadly with police across different levels so that the institutional relationship and room for maneuver is not dependent on just one or two people but dispersed more widely.

Working strategically is also about seeing activities as instrumental to the wider purpose of the program. While many of the activities undertaken by the Foundation are relatively conventional components of community policing, the underlying strategic objective is to motivate wider institutional change in policing. In this sense, it does not really matter whether the community-police forums, for instance, last forever or not. What matters is that change is triggered. Being able to program with an eye on this longer-term aim is thus important.

Staff take an evolutionary approach to change

Related to the above, Foundation staff also clearly

This involves regular horizon scanning to identify who is likely to be influential or in leadership positions in future so the Foundation can begin to build relationships with them in advance.

take an evolutionary or gradual approach to change. They are not focused on quick-wins or a revolutionary moment. Rather, they work at the speed that the local context allows – which is usually quite modest – and attempt to create opportunities along the way. For instance, both country programs have used perception surveys to inform police decision-making and policy,

and leverage this into work on other issues. This is important in community policing programs given the ambitious goals that they seek to achieve.

Adopting such an approach to change requires a long-term view (helped by the Foundation's long-term commitments to work in a country and staff who plan to live there in future). While outputs and outcomes for annual reporting are taken seriously, Foundation staff are playing a much longer game and focused on the wider transitions that they are ultimately seeking to achieve. Again, this relates to seeing activities as interim stepping stones to more thoroughgoing change, although whether the stepping stones will in fact lead to deeper change is a complicated issue. The point, however, is that the Foundation is able to adopt a longer time horizon than many aid organizations; this is critical when working to change an institution as resistant as the police.

5.3 INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

The Foundation's ways of working are also shaped by their use of information and knowledge – investing in it to contribute to program learning as well as

strategically using it to trigger momentum for change within counterpart institutions.

Learning disposition

Both of the community policing programs have cultivated a strong emphasis on learning, understanding the political economy of reform processes, and analyzing and discussing the ways in which this changes over time. This happens largely informally, stemming from the preferred ways of working of (especially management) staff. However, the annual reporting templates for the DFID Programme Partnership Arrangement, put in place by the regional conflict team, does encourage reflection on theories of change, embedded assumptions, and what changes might affect these.

Such political economy analysis assists in building an understanding of the players and their interests and motivations, which in turn influences decisions about where and how the Foundation works. In addition, both programs have established relationships with research organizations and opened themselves up to independent research on their work. This has happened through a wider Foundation engagement with the Justice and Security Research Programme (JSRP), based at the London School of Economics and Political Science, which saw researchers spend time with the community policing team in Timor-Leste, critically engaging with the development of their theory of change. Program teams also collaborated with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in a research program on international experience of community policing, with case studies conducted in both countries (see Wassel 2014; Chambers et al. 2014). These collaborations are indicative of the ways in which staff are encouraged to engage with research and integrate latest thinking into programming. Research findings may not always filter into programming, however, as there are disincentives to change course due to donor reporting and staff dispositions that will usually favor familiar and known approaches.

Foundation program teams also invest significantly in their own research. This has been most apparent in Timor-Leste where DFID funding is used almost solely for commissioning research and internal evaluations to deepen the team's understanding of what is going on at the local level, what is working, what is not, and why. This research has immediate relevance to implementation problems and has prompted programming changes in some cases. For instance, it was internally commissioned research that led to the decision to attach CPCs that had low prospects of sustainability to the *suku* councils, and to increase the program's focus on violence against women, and

to shift to a greater focus on building sustainability of the community policing model, rather than perfecting its application. The research has not prompted more significant changes, for instance at the level of the theory of change or its component sub-theories, but it has nonetheless ensured the program is responsive to learning. This interest in learning permeates the Foundation, as seen in other investments in conducting longitudinal surveys in various areas of work, including community policing, to track changes over time and highlight the progress of programming approaches.

Feeding information to counterparts to build momentum for change

The centrality of knowledge and information to Foundation ways of working is demonstrated by staff strategically feeding information to community policing partners to help push for reform or improve practice. Both the Timor-Leste and Sri Lanka teams have used survey results or wider research pieces to help prompt change. In Timor-Leste, for instance, surveys on community-police relations have provided important information to shape the PNTL's Strategic Plan, shifting from a crime solving to crime prevention focus. Survey data from the Foundation showed improvement in public perceptions of police at the district level, and helped make the case to senior police and politicians for greater investment in community policing. This led to community policing being announced by the PNTL as one of three priorities for the police (alongside traffic and borders). PNTL also asked the Foundation to include indicators on police visibility, community involvement, and professionalism in order to monitor progress. Given that the use of evidence

and information is critical to community policing practice (as part of being context sensitive and taking a problem-solving approach), feeding in information and building capacity for research itself contributes to improved community policing. In addition, the Foundation also uses information to demonstrate the value of community policing and drive momentum for institutional change.

In Sri Lanka, the Foundation has worked closely with the RPD of the SLPS to enhance their abilities to undertake research to support evidence-based planning. Activities like the survey are done in cooperation with the SLPS (although carried out by independent enumerators) to build ownership of the information generated and appreciate its value. This is, again, a gradual but promising process. For the first time, the SLPS have made public selected findings of the 2015 perceptions survey, suggesting an increasing commitment and willingness to engage with community policing issues.

An important facet of this is that the Foundation invests in research that partners will actually find useful, rather than just what program staff might think is most important. This links back to being locally led, appreciating that you are supporting local actors and their needs in a change process and thus tailoring activities to what is useful to them. It also highlights that community policing programs are not solely about working with 'cops on the beat'. For the Foundation, it is also about the systems that shape the orientation of policing and bringing knowledge to bear on them.

6. Reflections from The Asia Foundation experience

From this examination of the community policing approach adopted by The Asia Foundation, five critical reflections emerge relevant for all those working on community policing, not just The Asia Foundation. While they emerge from an analysis of the Foundation's community policing work, the discussion below flags pertinent issues to those attempting to transform policing. These reflections relate, first, to how ambitious objectives such as institutional change can be reconciled with the limitations of aid programming; second, to the line between community policing and police reform; third, to the problems with using community policing to strengthen state-society relations; fourth, to ways of engaging with plural security systems; and fifth, to potential future directions of community policing.

6.1 RECONCILING THE AMBITION OF INSTITUTIONAL REFORM WITH THE LIMITS OF PROGRAMMING

The Asia Foundation's community policing programs are fundamentally about institutional change. It is not just about language skills in Sri Lanka or CPCs in Timor-Leste. It is not even about 'stability', in the conservative sense of this as law and order. It is about reorienting the police to provide an effective service to citizens. This is important because it recognizes the pitfalls of much community policing work: it is not just about giving the police some community policing knowledge through training, or improving their capacity to investigate and respond to complaints. Such approaches risk strengthening the police without reforming them (Murray 2007). Rather it is an institutional change process that requires transformations in the culture, role, and behavior of police. This is also an incredibly ambitious objective.

Institutional reform may be politically unpalatable or too ambitious for individual project timeframes to be placed front and center. As a result, it does not always receive the attention in design and reporting documentation that it receives in practice. This is not purely an oversight. There are political reasons

why institutional change may not be an explicit goal in community policing programs, for example due to the sensitivity of such language amongst local counterparts in government or police. In addition, the blunt reporting requirements of some donors that call for quantitative, tangible outcomes do little to encourage programming on complex intangibles like institutional transformation that are difficult to measure. The theories of change used by the Foundation's programs cannot, in all cases, capture all that they are really trying to do through community policing.

Underlying both programs is a presumption that improved practices at the local level can aggregate up to the institutional level. This is well articulated in one of the Sri Lanka program's sub-theories that holds that community policing serves as a 'catalyst' for wider police transitions to a peacetime service focused on meeting public needs. This sub-theory is perhaps the lynchpin for the Foundation's work on community policing, making the local, community-level work and efforts to connect it to institutional change meaningful beyond ends in themselves. In both Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, efforts to make this linkage have been impressive: from ensuring visibility of community-level results at the highest levels in the police and politics, to using reporting and data gathered from monitoring of community policing activities to drive decision-making and policies by senior command staff. This helps the program go beyond achieving islands of effectiveness, as can often be the case (Denney 2015). Yet ultimately, institutional transformation of the police is not merely a policing reform but a political one. It involves those who have not previously been subject to public oversight and accountability submitting themselves to it. A significant literature details the drawn-out and messy process by which that has historically happened (North et al. 2009; and Hills 2012 on police reform specifically).

This raises a more general challenge: how can community policing work towards these more transformational aims when constrained by the need

for short-term results required by donors and by the need to keep potentially reform-averse counterparts on board? Here, the Foundation's experience in Timor-Leste and Sri Lanka can offer some guidance. Having an organizational presence in country that extends beyond particular funding cycles is key to being able to work towards longer-term institutional change. But it does require piecing together funding over the longer term. This means that program goals and activities may need to adapt to the priorities of different donors, or policy shifts in order to access the funding necessary to continue working towards institutional change. A long-term presence allows space to build sustained relationships with police that enable a better understanding of those supportive of, and resistant to change and, over time, will allow for more frank conversations about institutional change with some counterparts.

There are, of course, risks associated with this approach. First, the Foundation is potentially underselling what it is ultimately working towards if these goals are not captured in individual reporting frameworks. This is not insurmountable – but it does mean that other forms of reporting or documentation of results are likely needed to tell the full story of what programming has achieved, rather than relying solely on individual donor reporting. Second, there is a danger that community policing itself becomes instrumentalized by reform-averse elements of the police. They may be able to thwart efforts for more fundamental reforms and extract benefits from programs. Police can benefit by way of training, provision of equipment and supplies, divesting themselves of responsibility for local security, improving relationships with communities to access better intelligence and praise for undertaking reforms. 'Good news stories' can divert attention away from important underlying and ongoing problems. Police counterparts are thus able to shape, limit or redirect what community policing is able to achieve (Hills 2008). It is notable that community policing programs internationally have had limited success in strengthening police accountability compared with other objectives (Anti-Corruption Resource Centre 2012; Denney 2015). Unsurprisingly, this is an area where reforms like community policing have limited influence, often because they are opposed by some within the police. This underlines the extent to which externally led reforms are dialectical: "interactive processes that are best described as a waltz: one step forward is followed by one step sideways or backwards" (Hills 2008: 217).

The Foundation has worked to guard against 'isomorphic mimicry' (where counterparts take on

the veneer of reform without fundamentally changing their ways of operating (Pritchett et al. 2010: 3)) by routinely conducting political economy analysis. This helps staff understand where change is possible and non-threatening to those invested in the status quo; in turn, staff can attempt to trigger evolutionary changes that move towards reform, rather than introducing disruptive changes that can elicit resistance. This is an unending process of calculation and missteps are always a possibility. A good understanding of the incentives and political interests at play is probably the best armor against capture by the very forces a community policing program is trying to change.

Identifying the triggers and levers that can prompt interim steps towards change is crucial (Colletta and Muggah 2009). Training in and provision of survey data to drive decision-making in Sri Lanka is a good example of what this might look like. Similarly, in Timor-Leste, getting high performing, district-level community policing staff an audience with the president to trigger an increase in the budget demonstrates how small steps like brokering meetings can lead to bigger changes. There is a need to be modest here – something that is always difficult in the results-hungry world of donor agencies. The contributions are likely to be piecemeal and unpredictable. Achieving small gains when opportunities arise, however, requires consistent engagement so that relationships are in place and the political environment is understood.

6.2 THE LINE BETWEEN COMMUNITY POLICING AND POLICE REFORM

A further challenge stemming from the use of community policing as an entry point for institutional change, is that the line between when a program is doing community policing and when it is doing wider police reform blurs. At the outset of both community policing programs, for instance, it would not have been possible for the Foundation to engage in police reform. Rather, community policing was the benign entry point. But over time the political climate has changed in both countries, relationships with counterparts have deepened, and trust has been built. Now, pressing needs lie outside the confines of what is conventionally considered community policing and is more accurately described as police or institutional reform. For instance, better quality policing may now demand engaging in police budgeting, performance management systems, and so on. How, then, does an organization shift from doing community policing to these wider issues, when its initial mandate and agreement both with counterparts and donors was for community policing?

There are, of course, links between a better functioning police service and improved community policing. For example, an argument could be made that community policing requires effective budgetary processes to support it. But ultimately, if the value of supporting community policing has reached its limits, then support must evolve. As to whether it needs to be rebadged as police reform or some other name, seems less important. Here, the flexibility of the concept of community policing may be politically expedient (either in relation to donors and their political masters or counterparts) as it allows activities to retain this framing even when they may have evolved.

Shifting from community policing to wider police reform likely requires different skill sets and involves higher risks. While community policing calls for strong local linkages with communities, for instance, police budgetary reform requires budgetary skills as well as a more thorough understanding of government processes. It also touches on sensitive issues of financial transparency and oversight, and the political machinations at play in budget allocations. This is not to suggest that community policing is not also deeply political, but rather that community policing does not go to the heart of political (and financial) interests of the police in the same way.

The Asia Foundation has developed some of the political relationships necessary to branch into wider police reform. Moreover, in neither Sri Lanka nor Timor-Leste has community policing outrun its usefulness and thus any additional areas of work – such as budgetary reform – can likely be added on to the existing program, rather than requiring a wholesale change in approach. Ideas on possible future directions for community policing work in these countries are set out at the end of this section.

6.3 LETTING GO OF STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS

Both programs cite state-society relations as the ultimate outcome (in the case of Timor-Leste) or impact (in the case of Sri Lanka). In both cases, staff describe this as deriving from funding frameworks developed by donors rather than program team intentions for community policing. The tenuous links between community policing and state-society relations suggest this objective does not helpfully capture what programs are capable of and saddles them with an unrealistic goal.

The quality of state-society relations is determined by a range of other political factors, not just – or even primarily – NGO programming (see also Pelser 2009). While much loved by donors, suggestive of a

resilient social contract in which conflict is less likely to occur because the state meets people's basic needs and people see the state as the legitimate source of authority, state-society relations is difficult to operationalize in programming. The logic is that because the police are a visible 'face of the state', if people have a good experience interacting with the police, then this will accrue up to the state. This goes even further than assuming that community policing will catalyze wider police reform to suggesting it can improve state legitimacy. The logic is folly for several reasons. First, for this to be plausible, the majority of community-police interactions would need to be characterized by the application of community policing. Community policing principles do not yet inform the majority of policing experience in either Sri Lanka or Timor-Leste. Thus, it is more likely that citizens are experiencing un-reformed policing that would presumably do little to improve their view of the state. It thus does not seem possible that any community policing program could claim to have contributed to improved state-society relations until community policing was the dominant mode of policing. That is an incredibly high standard to aim for or expect of community policing programs.

Second, it is not possible to reduce a multifaceted concept such as 'the legitimacy of the state' down to one interaction with one of its organs. For a greater sense of state legitimacy to be achieved other services would need to also be delivered well in addition to policing. Emerging research from the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) suggests that experiencing problems with service delivery is more likely to result in a poor view of the state than satisfaction with service delivery is to result in a positive view of the state (Mallett, et al. 2015: 44-45). This implies that improvements in policing will not necessarily help to build a greater sense of state legitimacy. Indeed, the relationship between both access to and satisfaction with service delivery and perceptions of state legitimacy are not consistent or linear in the SLRC findings. Third, the SLRC research also finds that who delivers services is largely irrelevant – with no consistent or linear difference in perceptions of state legitimacy if a service is provided by the state or by a non-state actor (be it a NGO, business, or customary actor) (Ibid.). This suggests that it does not matter that the police are the 'face of the state' (a point also made by the Timor-Leste community policing program regarding the importance of plural security structures) (see Wassel 2016). State-society relations are far too multi-faceted to be influenced by the community policing programs of aid organizations. They may still be important or contribute to significant changes. Indeed, the goal of institutional change,

discussed above, while ambitious can be smartly pursued with appropriate timeframes and political savvy. Given that strengthening state-society relations is not a goal that emerged from the Foundation's country programs, and given the difficulty in drawing lines of logic between community policing and this goal, it is best replaced by more realistic goal-setting.

6.4 WAYS OF ENGAGING WITH PLURAL SECURITY SYSTEMS

Community policing programs, as part of SSR more broadly, are often criticized for failing to engage with the plural systems of security and justice that constitute the ways in which people access safety in practice (Baker 2008). The Foundation, particularly in Timor-Leste, engages directly with such plural security actors in their work with the CPCs and *suku* councils, for instance: supporting these mechanisms to resolve disputes and strengthening their connection with the police. However, the approach remains characterized

While plural security actors are actively engaged, it is by way of strengthening their connections to state security providers.

by an underlying statist conception of security (that is, that the state is the preeminent security actor that coordinates, regulates or is responsible for other non-state providers) (Sedra 2015: 173). In both countries, community policing is focused on implementing changes in the state police and improving relations between communities

(which includes customary security providers in Timor-Leste) and state security actors. While plural security actors are actively engaged, it is by way of strengthening their connections to state security providers. This is in keeping with most community policing work but differs from efforts that aim to work with or strengthen community-led policing practices. In part, this stems from a desire for programs to be locally led and sustainable, thus leading to engagement with the government and the police service who (at least in theory) represent citizens and have the capacity to fund community policing. In Timor-Leste, where the realities of legal pluralism are most apparent, the program understands ongoing fragility/insecurity as linked to ineffective relationships between formal and informal security actors (The Asia Foundation 2012b). It aims to solve this by seeking to enhance the presence and effectiveness of the state police so that they are relied on more, and to ensure the state is responsible for the more utilized customary dispute resolution practices. This reflects efforts undertaken

in many parts of the world to rationalize, regulate, or formalize informal dispute resolution practices that can have the unintended consequence of in fact undermining those very practices (see for instance Chopra and Isser 2011).

The Foundation embraces plural security but within a wider statebuilding lens. This is in keeping with statebuilding efforts that seek to ensure the state is the primary authority and has the capacity to deliver services but does not preclude the possibility of non-state actors as a form of 'good enough' governance (Sedra 2015: 173). While this is in many ways a desirable goal and is intended to offset injustices that customary justice can perpetrate against particularly women and youth, it does take a particular, statist approach to plural security provision. This is in contrast to approaches that would aim to support already existing security providers and not connect them to the state, adopting either a more localized approach to security or a hybrid/non-state approach that does not work towards a liberal Weberian view of the state (Sedra 2015; MacGinty 2008). This alternative recognizes the potential virtues of remaining 'non-state', including insulation from politicization and the dysfunction of state policing, as well as greater connection to community norms and values (Scott 2009). One approach is not necessarily better but recognizing the particularity of the approach adopted and considering alternatives may assist in refining or challenging chosen or default approaches.

Relatedly, a police-centric approach to improving security is just one of multiple ways into issues of security (ICAI 2015). Security – and even policing – are multi-sectoral (Rigertink 2015). Improved safety and security are not only achieved through better policing but through a range of other interventions (Bennett 2014). Street lighting is perhaps the most commonly mentioned, but other approaches are equally relevant – such as using town planning to render spaces safer, providing vocational and employment opportunities and a sense of belonging to those who might otherwise disrupt the peace, or teaching boys and men about gender equality to rectify the inequitable power relations that underlie violence against women and girls. If police are the default focus of safety, security, and policing programs, other interventions could be overlooked.

6.5 POTENTIAL FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Where might The Asia Foundation take its community policing programs in future? The Foundation treats community policing as both a general philosophy for the police service, as well as the responsibility of a

particular unit or particular officers. This gets around the challenge of opting for one approach over the other – resulting in either no one taking responsibility for community policing or it being the duty of just one unit siloed from the wider police service. The problem in practice, as both country programs note, is that with particular units or officers dedicated to community policing, the siloed effect still occurs despite the fact that all officers are meant to be community police officers. As a result, while those responsible for implementing community policing might be improving the services they provide, the rest of the police service carries on as usual. In Timor-Leste, this can mean paramilitary style policing in joint operations with the military. In Sri Lanka, it could mean human rights violations against suspected criminals. How can the police improve its reputation amongst citizens and built trust when such variation in policing practice exists?

One way to address this may be for the Foundation to adopt a problem-focused approach to community policing. Drawing on the ‘problem-driven’ approach to development challenges, this aims to focus on making concrete and actionable recommendations for implementing community policing in specific parts of a police service (Fritz and Levy 2014: 4). Rather than

focus on community policing principles and teaching these generally to either those tasked with being ‘community police officers’ or across the service, programming could look at how community policing applies in practice to particular policing functions and units. This would involve unpacking what community policing means and looks like for traffic police, for criminal investigation teams, for gender desks, and for tactical response teams and then working with such policing units to teach and demonstrate what applied community policing looks like for their functions. This would help to make community policing practically relevant for all policing functions. Some work in this vein has already commenced in both Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste but could become a larger part of programming and support wider transformation of policing. It also takes seriously the fact that community policing is meant to be a philosophy for the entire service – not just a unit – and thus help to institutionalize it. While this is not necessarily where a community policing program might begin (given the buy-in necessary across the police service), it may offer a way to extend community policing programs where there is general acceptance of the philosophy within the service and there are existing relationships that could be leveraged.

7. Conclusion

With continuing international interest in community policing, this paper has sought to set out The Asia Foundation's distinctive approach to this area of programming. Drawing on its ongoing programs in Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, the Foundation has navigated the high expectations placed on community policing by donors to focus activities on the overarching goals

Community policing is thus not pursued as an end in itself but rather as an entry point into wider policing reforms.

of peace and stability, and institutional reform. Community policing is thus not pursued as an end in itself but rather as an entry point into wider policing reforms. It serves as the benign entry point for building relationships and room for maneuver to ultimately create space and momentum for more thoroughgoing police reform. This approach does not shy away from the ambitious objectives that characterize community policing internationally, yet a number of features of the Foundation's approach make this plausible.

The Foundation's ability to work in this way is assisted by its orientation as a governance organization, providing it with a lens that approaches community policing as a political process of institutional reform – rather than technical policing reform. The long-term presence of country offices means that while donor funding may be short term, the Foundation has been able to piece together funding for more sustained engagement in community policing. This has allowed for relationship building and consistent and evolving programming, supplemented by a strong presence of local staff with deep country knowledge who work strategically and invest in continual learning. The Foundation emphasizes locally led programming and 'best fit', rather than 'best practice' approaches to reform.

The reflections section raises a number of challenges that emerge from the Foundation's experience and that confront all community policing programs. The challenge of working towards institutional reform within the limitations of an aid program is not likely to disappear soon. How to fit what are complicated, non-linear change processes into results-focused funding cycle timeframes remains difficult. The boundary between community policing and police reform is unclear. Those working on institutional police reform must balance what is politically feasible and expedient, with what is ultimately most transformational.

The increasing recognition of plural security and justice systems calls for greater engagement with such systems as part of community policing efforts. The Foundation has gone further than many working on community policing on this front, however could benefit from problematizing their approach in light of alternatives. Finally, programming could be deepened in future by taking a problem-focused approach to community policing. This could focus on operationalizing community policing across a range of policing areas to move beyond institutionalizing of community policing as generic principles, and broaden responsibility beyond one unit of the police.

This paper should also be a call for the wider community of practice working on community policing to share their own experiences and approaches; how they navigate a complex and ambitious concept in programming; and what challenges they have confronted in working towards more responsive and accountable policing. Capturing The Asia Foundation's approach is an initial step in this direction of mutual learning and strengthening of community policing programming.



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The Asia Foundation

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