

The GLOCEPS

Weekly Influential Brief

Research and Analysis in Security and Defence Pillar

Challenges to implementation of community policing in Kenya

Dr John Mwangi
Denis Muniu



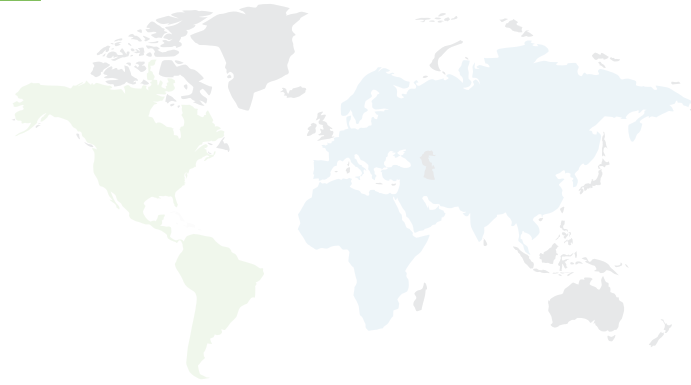
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Executive Summary

Community policing (CP) was initiated in 2005 to improve police and community relations; enable democratic policing and create a safe and secure society. However, it continues to face challenges. These challenges include trust deficits, public participation, conflict of mandates, and financial and technical capacity

shortfalls. The brief recommends, among others, creation of outreach programs to enhance trust and confidence between communities and the police; public participation; streamlining the working of CP and Nyumba Kumi; and increasing budgetary allocations.





Context

Community policing has made gains in democratizing the police service even though several challenges impact on its execution. In 2017, the National Police Service (NPS) documented CP guidelines anchored on the National Police Service Act 11A of 2011 (NPSA, 2011). The policy provides guidelines on NPS composition and execution of its mandate. It was adopted

following calls for police reforms due to excessive use of force during the 2007 electoral process. Subsequently, CP was enshrined in NPSA, 2011 to enhance police-community partnerships and organizational decentralization. However, CP is yet to be fully effective in crime prevention thus the requisite for new policy interventions to strengthen its implementation.



Key Issues

The following are the impediments to the successful working of CP in Kenya.

Trust deficits

The lack of trust between communities and members of the police service continues to undermine the successful operationalization of CP. Fostering confidence and building trust between the two actors is integral to bridging gaps and strengthening interactions. Nevertheless, negative actions by police officers

impede this partnership. Furthermore, information leakages compromise confidentiality, hampering crime reporting as residents fear reprisal attacks. Henceforth it obstructs collective mapping and the creation of local solutions in crime prevention. Slow responsiveness by the officers in averting crime or acting on





information given further aggravates the situation. Correspondingly, police conduct continues to erode public trust as the institution has been accused of corruption, collusion with criminals, arbitrary arrests, harassment, extrajudicial killings, and disappearances.

Equally, some police officers continue to perceive it as an information-extracting tool and a policy that interferes with their work.

Citizens actively involved with CP have been deemed police informants, a role widely associated with suspicion in Kenya. Similarly, civilians serving in CP committees have also misused their mandate to engage in harassment, extortion and blackmail of the residents they serve. Vetting members of the CP committees would therefore help to counter corruption, and intimidation that have been associated with some members.



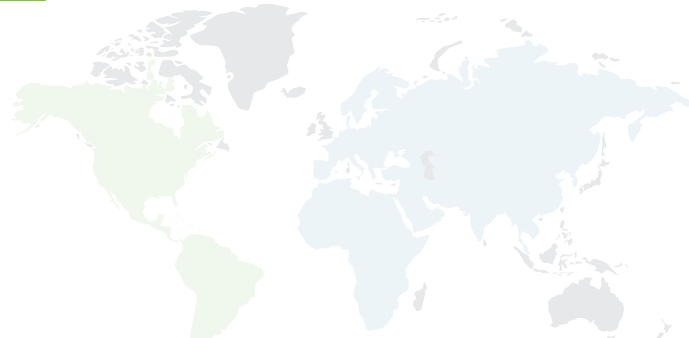
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Public participation

Public participation is essential in informing key government policies however, the adoption of CP in Kenya did not involve all stakeholders. CP has been externally driven and has not fully brought all participants on board to contextualize its implementation, as there are complex socio-political dynamics at the local level. It has been conceptualized as a one size fit all strategy, yet the policing terrain is dynamic. Counties have different security needs and demands and it is therefore imperative for all actors to be involved in developing county

specific policies. In spite of that, this was not envisaged in setting up CP guidelines and structures. It was due to the different understanding of CP and non-involvement of all participants in its formulation process. Resultantly, it led to the weak buy in of CP by both the police and the civilians. County Policing Authorities, which act as coordination mechanisms of CP, have not been operationalized. Part of the reason being that not all key entities were involved in establishing the authority and its mandate.





Additionally, CP guidelines are not fully followed. Community members under the NPSA, 2011 are supposed to select committee officials through the community forums. CP membership ought to incorporate different segments of society such as youth, women,

religious leaders, and the business community. Instead, membership in CP structures is largely riddled with claims of nepotism, economic and political considerations. Still, in a number of cases, the whole process is unilateral and devoid of public participation.



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Conflict of mandates

While initiatives such as CP and Nyumba Kumi (NK) are aimed at improving relations and communication between the community and the police, they remain disjointed in terms of coordination. In 2013, NK was introduced in Kenya to anchor CP at the household level and is intended to enhance communication between community members and security officials as well as intelligence gathering. Even so, there arises competition between the two models. NK

reports to the Ministry of Interior through local administrators, while CP reports to the Inspector General of Police. Resultantly, power dynamics between the two initiatives, leads to confusion and conflict of mandates. Whereas, the NPS Strategic Plan 2018-2022 notes the aforementioned challenge, it does not provide clear mechanisms of how to streamline the working of the two models.





Financial and technical capacity shortfalls

Inadequacy of technical and financial capacity hinders CP initiatives. While funding of CP is the mandate of the NPS as enshrined in the NPSA, 2011, there has been inadequate financial backing dedicated to actualizing it, further influencing the running of these initiatives. The recent granting of financial autonomy to the NPS in budget matters is likely to bring more efficiency in resource allocation.

Moreover, there is a lack of adequate sensitization on the objectives and structures of CP among the public and within the NPS. This is due to the insufficient number of security experts involved in putting CP into practice. Additionally, resource constraints further hamper periodic evaluations that would be useful for continuous lesson learning and improvements.

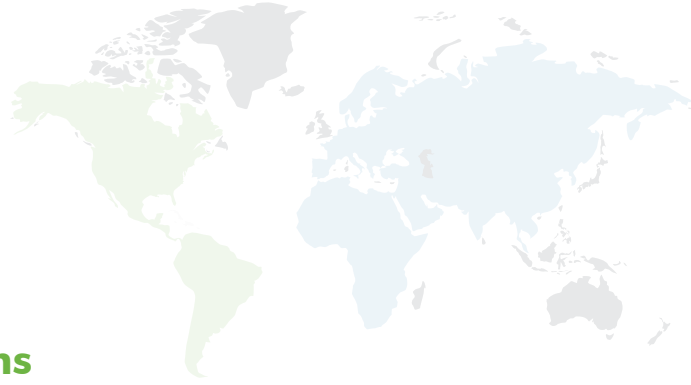


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Conclusion

Community policing remains fundamental in nurturing police-community relations in crime prevention, but several barriers continue to obstruct its optimum implementation. It calls for increased resource allocation and new policy directives in restructuring CP to an all-inclusive framework that will continually reinforce the faith and confidence of all participants involved.





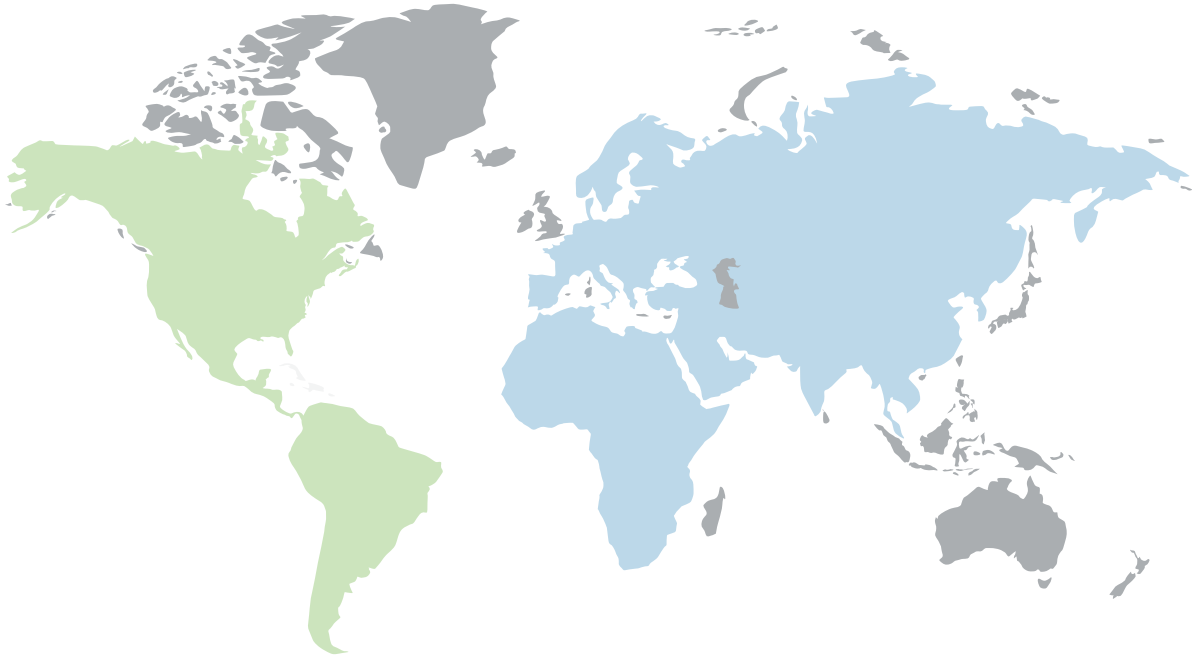
Recommendations

1. The National Police Service should;
 - a) increase budgetary allocations to CP initiatives within the counties.
 - b) create outreach programs in conjunction with communities to build trust and confidence.
 - c) enhance countrywide sensitization campaigns of police officers to the whole idea of CP.
 - d) periodically evaluate CP for lesson learning and continuous improvement.
 - e) fortify partnerships with other security experts in CP implementation.
 - f) subject CP guidelines to public review with a view to developing county-specific CP guidelines.
 - g) develop a strategy in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior to streamline the working of CP and Nyumba Kumi to avoid duplication and conflicts on mandates.
 - h) fully operationalize its Strategic Plan 2018-2022 to formalize vetting of CP members to enhance inclusivity.





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(GLOCEPS)

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Off Kiambu Road, Nairobi Kenya
P.O. Box 27023-00100, Nairobi.
Telephone: 0112401331
Email: info@gloceps.org
Web: www.gloceps.org

