

# Chapter 3

## Police-Community Platforms for Local Ownership

Relations between police and civil society can sometimes be hostile, grounded in deep suspicion and mistrust. A peacebuilding approach to policing emphasises the rapport between police forces and the communities they serve. It aims to engage local citizens as much as possible in policing policies and operations. The idea behind this approach, that puts local ownership at the centre, is that human security will improve significantly when police engage directly with civil society. When local citizens are able to define their own protection needs and engage in planning, implementing and evaluating solutions to their problems, the resulting programmes and operations will be more appropriate and effective in contributing to human security. The organisation Saferworld, an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives, uses the term “community security” to describe this approach. Community security reflects the idea that community representatives and police personnel work together to solve problems of violence, crime, disorder or safety and thus make their communities safer. Peacebuilding approaches to police and civil society relations usually have some common characteristics:

### Adopting Collaborative Attitudes

In many contexts, community members and local police representatives view each other with an “us versus them” attitude. The lack of trust and even hostility can be due to political or social conflicts. But often there are also structural, organisational or personal factors that caused police and communities to look at each other with suspicion. Figure 10 below summarises some of the reasons why relations between police and community can be challenging. In order to transform hostile attitudes into collaborative ones, it is important to bring the groups in direct contact with each other. This enables them to change the perceptions they have of each other and better understand each other’s needs.

Structural	Organisational	Personal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deeply entrenched hostile attitudes among population at large</li> <li>• Corruption</li> <li>• Impunity</li> <li>• Discrimination of women and marginalised group</li> <li>• Lack of oversight of the informal security sector (e.g. tribal courts)</li> <li>• Lack of distinction between military and police roles and responsibilities leading to misperceptions among civil society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of policies, procedures, communication on how to engage with local communities or how to engage with police</li> <li>• Lack of resources (insufficient staffing, inadequate facilities, equipment, or uniforms)</li> <li>• Lack of incentives to motivate police staff to engage with civilians</li> <li>• Insensitivity to the needs of women or other marginalised groups due to gender or ethnic imbalances among police staff makeup</li> <li>• Lack of professionalism (inappropriate behaviour, disordered management, etc.)</li> <li>• Inadequate organisational attitude (overly bureaucratic – police, overly vindictive – civil society)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate conflict management and transformation skill</li> <li>• Insufficient knowledge of local languages</li> <li>• Illiteracy causing lack of professional capacities and leading other side to adopt a disrespectful attitude</li> </ul>

Figure 14: Reasons for Uncooperative Attitudes Between Police and Civil Society

### **Conducting a Participatory Security Needs Assessment**

This assessment is the basis for a context-specific and locally owned human security strategy for three main reasons: First, it provides a more accurate and authentic picture of human security needs. Second, it enables communities to better understand and articulate their own particular human security needs and to start thinking about solutions. Third, it often provides communities and local authorities an opportunity to make first contact and establish a working relationship. In order to conduct this assessment, peacebuilding groups usually assemble focus groups made up of an inclusive and diverse population of the community and facilitate a discussion around human security in which they help the communities identify a list of needs.

### **Setting Up Regular Communication Mechanisms**

Due to the negative attitude mentioned above, community members are often actively avoiding contact with the police and police officers also show little effort to reach out to the community. Police and local communities can only establish good working relationships and jointly address human security problems if they are in regular contact. To achieve this, they need to set up and commit to a steady process of exchange. This may include various forms of in-person meetings such as focus group discussions, town hall meetings, public discussion forums, negotiation tables as well as written forms of exchange such as petitions, public announcements, websites, local media and public signage. Often, an advisory committee made up of police and civil society representatives helps to choose the right communication vehicles and orchestrate the exchange.

### **Improving Conflict Management and Transformation Skills**

Training for police staff has usually been very technical, focusing on when and how to use weapons. This has usually been accompanied by training on how to avoid becoming subject to criminal procedures for the illegitimate use of force. Rather than learning how to enforce the law to protect others from violence and crime, police officers learned to work around the law to make sure they are not liable themselves. In many contexts, skills for effective relationship building such as communication, negotiation and mediation, have been entirely neglected and not integrated into training courses. Local communities, too, often had little exposure to these concepts. In many of the cases illustrated here, police staff and community members were able to improve their skills in these areas and thus engage more effectively with each other. In some situations, police and civil society members were encouraged to attend the trainings together. Participants and organisers of these joint workshops considered them as very useful, because they provided participants with the ability to improve their skills, and the opportunity to interact with participants from the other side with whom they have often had little or no previous contact.

### **Changing Organisational Structures and Incentives**

Police departments that embrace community security approaches need to make significant changes to provide their staff with policies, resources and incentives for engaging with civil society. Departments may decide to re-write their mission statements to emphasise the need to build a culture of service orientation, protection of civilians, and accountability to the law. They may also revise their recruitment policies to include more gender and ethnic diversity, establish codes of conduct and provide reward schemes to change the individual behaviour of their police officers. Finally, they may increase their human resources and add facilities to enable regular meetings with local communities. Such organisational change can be slow and expensive, but they will significantly contribute to increasing local ownership and legitimacy of security sector, thus improving human security for communities at risk.

Police departments that have implemented some of the above changes recognise they can do their job better when civil society participates actively. When engaging with local communities, police can also provide a bridge for civil society to communicate and relate to the justice system. Police advocate for victim-centred restorative justice processes where offenders are held accountable to victims rather than the state. Finally, community security approaches can also

create new opportunities for civil society to engage policymakers at the state level to articulate their definition and approach to human security, defining threats and strategies to improve safety.

### **Reforming the Local, Regional and National State Policies**

Engaging with state actors at all levels is important in order to make achievements at the community level sustainable and address many of the structural problems affecting human security at the local level such as lack of effectiveness, inclusiveness or accountability of formal security mechanisms. Peacebuilding groups often engage in public or private dialogue with state officials in order to increase the attention given to human security needs at the local level, improve policies and practice, better define mandates, roles and responsibilities of different security sector groups to ensure their coordination, and allocate resources adequately.

### **Strengthening Awareness and Capacity of Civil Society at Large**

Increasing awareness among the broad public is key in order to encourage local communities to work with the police for human security goals. Peacebuilding groups work to change the attitudes and expectations of the population at large and show what all citizens can do to make their communities safer. Peacebuilding groups may raise awareness on specific security issues such as gender-based violence or inform the public about local peacebuilding initiatives with the police encouraging them to replicate them in other communities.

Each of the following cases illustrates some of these various elements of an approach to policing that is based on local ownership.

## **Afghanistan: “Democratic Policing”**

*Written with Aziz Rafiee*

In addition to the challenges of lack of training, policies, facilities and public trust, Afghanistan was a testing ground for multiple interventions to reform the police all happening at the same time. These included initiatives related to counterinsurgency policing, counter-narcotics policing, intelligence-led policing, arming local communities to act like police, and community or democratic policing. Each approach relied on a distinct analysis of the security problems and relied on different, if not competing, theories of how to improve policing. While many programmes assumed the problem with policing stemmed from a lack of weapons or training in how to use them, or a problem of discipline and corruption, or a lack of training in human rights, one police programme took a different approach based on the belief that public lack of trust in and community relationships with the police was the fundamental problem.

Recognizing the need to coordinate police reform and development with governance, justice reform, disarmament, and other government efforts, the Afghan Ministry of Interior asked the UN Development Programme to conduct research and write a strategy paper for police-community engagement in the Afghan context. Consultations with diverse stakeholders including parliamentarians, NGOs, media, academics, and police personnel, and community members, especially vulnerable groups such as women, ethnic minorities and economically deprived communities, provided. Unlike other police reform efforts, this programme was “people-oriented” and was almost completely Afghan-led, with Afghan civil society organisations playing a prominent role in designing the program.

The Afghan Civil Society Forum-organisation (ACSFo) and other civil society groups helped to facilitate the

#### **The challenge**

Communities lacked trust in police and police were unable to protect civilians.

#### **Theory of change:**

Creating forums to improve the relationship between the community and the police increased community trust and provided police with information needed to improve their performance.

research and design of the programme known as *Police e Mardumi* (in Dari language) or *Da Toleni Police* (in Pashto language). While similar to other community policing programmes in other countries, it was referred to as the “democratic policing” programme to distinguish it from the confusing use of the term “community policing” within the Afghan context to refer to a parallel programme also known as the Afghanistan Local Police (ALP) initiative, based on arming community fighters to protect their own region. The democratic policing programme had four main components: training of the community and police first separately and then together; developing neighbourhood watch committees made up of community members; facilitating community-police dialogue at the local, district and provincial levels; and problem-solving forums and mechanisms to invite public reporting on security concerns.

The programme began with three types of training. While other police training programmes focused more on the “hard security” skills of enemy identification, use of weapons and force, the democratic policing programme spent two weeks focusing primarily on the “soft skills” of Islamic-based human rights, communication skills, leadership skills and conflict resolution methods, psychosocial counselling, legal issues related to rights of vulnerable groups and police and state roles and responsibilities. Police received training in human rights and police procedures relating to detention. A separate training for the community provided skills in advocacy and encouragement to see police not as “big men” who could not be approached, but as public servants whose job requires them to listen to community members. A third set of training brought the police and community together to learn about the rule of law. Unlike other police training programmes that relied heavily on interpreters and lectures, this democratic policing programme used roleplays, pictures and group dialogue to foster practical learning and build relationships in the training. This was important given the high rates of illiteracy.



Photo 15: Afghan Democratic Policing Training. Photo Credit: Afghan Civil Society Forum organisation

Relationship building and joint problem solving were central features of this democratic policing program. A neighbourhood watch committee formed in each community. It was made up of seven community members, including at least one or two women. In some communities,

religious leaders also participated in the neighbourhood watch program. Religious leaders have historically played important roles in overseeing the security sector, so could lend the project a sense of legitimacy.

ACSFo and other civil society groups facilitated bimonthly meetings between police and communities, including the neighbourhood watch committees. At these meetings, the community identified security challenges and designed local strategies to solve them. For example, the community could report on their concerns for children's safety walking to school and together with the police, they could develop a plan for protecting school children. In some cases, these community-police forums expanded beyond public safety concerns toward a broader human security agenda. In Samangan province, for example, the community identified water scarcity as a primary threat to their security. In some cases, police-community meetings at district level were very tense. The programme facilitators decided to focus on the provincial level instead. Community representatives brought their concerns about police bribery, corruption and laziness to the provincial chief of police. At the next month's meeting, the chief of police came with answers to the community and commitments to address the problems. These meetings increased police accountability to the public. Police realised they could be fired for reports from the community based on their performance.



**Photo 16: Community-Police Forum**

**Photo Credit: Afghan Civil Society Forum organisation**

days, representatives from the police, community, local government and a religious leader would open these boxes and decide how to respond. For example, in one case a girl put in a complaint in front of her school naming the location of a man whom she had seen kill a woman. In another case, someone made a complaint against a specific government official who was corrupt and not doing his job. In the case of a group of girls that had run away from home to escape force child marriage, the community and police were able to negotiate with families and find ways of returning many girls to their homes and allowing them to continue their education. Most of the complaints were anonymous, making it difficult to investigate some accusations. But in some cases, the boxes provided needed information about how to protect the community.

In addition, the democratic policing project created two mechanisms for public to report information and grievances to or about the police. Police stations set up "information desks" and created call-in hotlines and/or complaint and suggestion boxes to receive information and complaints from the public. The complaint and suggestion boxes were distributed in front of schools, parks, and mosques. Every fifteen

In provinces with severe violence, such as Kunduz, the information desks and crisis response hotlines were the only feature of this programme in operation. There were no participatory dialogues where community members could discuss security threats and options for addressing them with the local police. It was assumed that the democratic policing concept to facilitate dialogue between police and community members would not work in these regions.<sup>41</sup> However, Afghan media worked with civil society and the Ministry of the Interior to produce a large scale public awareness campaigns using mobile phones, social media, and TV and radio dramas to

provide the public with a positive vision of the police as well as citizen rights and information on how to use the 119 crisis response hotline.

The Afghan Civil Society Forum-organisation and other civil society groups also monitored and reported on the progress of the program, building in a system of civil society oversight and accountability of the police to the public. Both police and community members believed that the problem-solving, participatory process to identify security threats and develop human security strategies between the police and the community improved their relationship.<sup>42</sup>



**Photo17: Opening Community-Police "Suggestion Box"**  
Photo Credit: Afghan Civil Society Forum organization

## Bangladesh: "Community Security"

*Written with Bibhash Chakraborty*

Increased levels of violence, lack of confidence to interact with security providers, and a state-centred approach to security that included time consuming response processes have led many local community members in Bangladesh to fear discrimination and violence. Since the contested 2014 elections, the deadlock between the ruling parties and the opposition has increased state-level violence in Bangladesh. Over 100 deaths and around 200 cases of severe injuries due to petrol bombing have been reported from January to May 2015.<sup>43</sup> The opposition called permanent blockades and frequently countrywide strikes (*hartals*), which lead to additional attacks and disrupt travel and business. Extremist groups and criminal gangs have been thriving in such a volatile climate exposing local communities to increased risk of gender-based violence and abuses related to drugs, alcohol and gambling.

At the same time, communities feel less confident to approach police officials or representatives of the local administration and to ask for sincere, effective and trustful responses to the current problems. High levels of corruption, inadequate staffing and lack of communication have fuelled these suspicious attitudes that persist despite the government's effort to set up local structures and bodies (Standing Committees for Law and Order and community policing forums called *thana*) to solve the security problems. The fact that Bangladeshi authorities have traditionally seen security as the sole prerogative of the state and prioritised exclusive and reactive responses to state security over more inclusive and proactive human security strategies have only added to communities' feelings of vulnerability.

### **The challenge**

There are increased levels of violence at the community level and weak relations between police and local communities.

### **Theory of change:**

Build trust, cooperation and collaborative actions between community members and security providers at the local and national levels will improve access to and provision of human security, justice and development.

Saferworld, an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives, and the Bangladeshi NGO BRAC, a development organisation dedicated to alleviating poverty by empowering the poor, implemented a four-year project in 16 sites across five districts of south-western Bangladesh. The programme brings communities together to identify their security needs and enables them to collaborate positively with state security actors in order to find solutions. Saferworld named this approach “community security” because it enables communities to articulate and their needs, participate in the response, and as a consequence feel valued and protected.

Two key elements for this community-centred approach to security are a large-scale participatory assessment of safety-security needs and the establishment of an inclusive consultation process.

### **Large-scale Participatory Assessment of Security Needs**

To assess the context, cases, actors and dynamics behind violence in Bangladesh, Saferworld and BRAC held 80 focus group discussions with a total of 816 participants (cover 43% female) including minorities, women, youth and local authorities. Participants in each locality identified their specific security issues such as violence against women, sexual harassment, early marriage, child labour, theft, hijacking, drug abuse, gambling, political violence, water logging (flooding of agricultural land) or lack of fair judgment in criminal processes.

### **Inclusive Consultation Processes**

Once the localities had come up with list of the most pressing issues, Saferworld and BRAC supported them to set up a consultation process driven by the “Community Action Committee” (CAC). The CACs are made up of community members with special attention to vulnerable or traditionally excluded members but could also include local government and security representatives. For example, one CAC included farmers, teachers, housewives, members of local women groups, local businessmen, local religious leaders, village police (*chowkider*, *dafadar*) and youth. The selection process is entirely owned by the community. In the beginning, CAC organised project orientation meetings with different level stakeholders to share information about their work and asking support for their activities following the action plan. The committees convene monthly with representatives of an Advisory Committee (made up of local government representatives, local opinion leaders and government frontline officials). At times delegates of the community’s Youth and Women’s Groups also join in to bring up pressing security issues and discuss possible joint solutions.

**Photo 18: Action planning workshop with selected community representatives in Gopalganj**  
Photo credit: Saferworld



### **An Example: Addressing Sexual Harassment of Girls**

If a girl in the community has become a victim of sexual harassment, her parents will either directly report the incident to the CAC or a neighbour of the victim will inform the CAC members. The CAC then decides an appropriate action to take. For example, it will approach the family of the boy who committed the abuse and propose and discuss remedial measures with the family. In case this is not effective, for example because the boy is not sensitive to the influence of his family due to his involvement with the local drug-trafficking mafia, the CAC can take up the issue with the locally elected members. If this failed, it can bring the issue to the attention of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee who represents the local government or it can approach the police. These authorities can then propose more formal punitive measures such as condemning the boy to community service or even imprisonment.

This example shows that the CACs have also been able to work as mediators between the community and police facilitating the reporting of incidents. This function is especially important when dealing with more serious crimes such as rape or murder. When victims or witnesses are hesitant to report either due to shame or fear of reprisals the CAC can communicate with the local government and police on their behalf.

The CAC consultations with local authorities, police and administration have led to stronger relations between civil society and the security sector. They have achieved a change of attitude and an increased level of collaboration among communities and local government representatives and police officers in the affected communities. Community members have become more confident and proactive about addressing security problems and local government and police officers are showing a greater sense of responsibility and willingness to respond. The project has not only contributed to improving human security but also to fostering social cohesion, strengthening state-society relationships, and increasing state legitimacy and responsiveness and thus advancing the broader human security agenda in Bangladesh.

### **Saferworld's Operational Handbook on Community-Police Cooperation**

The [\*Operational Handbook on Community Policy Cooperation\*](#) published by Saferworld and Centre for Security Studies in 2010 provides excellent step-by-step guidelines to community-based policing. The manual is part of the national community-based policing strategy that was designed by the Working Team for the implementation of the National Community-Based Policing Strategy and approved by the country's Council of Ministers in 2007. It is primarily designed for police officers but will also be useful to community leaders, representatives of municipal authorities, and other non-police members of consultation processes around human security at the local level. The manual contains templates, checklists and other practical tools for all stages of a community-based policing programme including:

- Analysing the context
- Mobilizing the relevant people
- Identifying community problems
- Designing efficient responses
- Implementing the solutions
- Assessing the impact
- Reaching out to the public

The handbook was produced in close collaboration with police officers and is based on the principle of community ownership.

### **Saferworld's Participatory Conflict and Security Assessment in Uganda**

Saferworld uses participatory conflict and security assessment also in other contexts to identify the factors causing violence for local communities. For example, in the Karamoja region in Uganda, Saferworld collaborated with two local community organizations to:

- Design a questionnaire aimed at identifying the factors driving insecurity in this particular region. For example: Why are there incidents of violence? What are the underlying tensions between two groups, between a group and security actors, between a group and other government actors? What impact do these factors have on the community's desire for security?
- Select participants for the assessment among the community with particular attention to elders (who have seen the evolution of the conflict), women (who are often the most vulnerable to attacks but not included in peacebuilding efforts), youth (who often instigate or participate in violence), children (who are innocent but may have knowledge of what is happening), adult men (who may be witnesses, perpetrators or victims) and witch doctors (who are often consulted by warriors to foretell whether and how to carry out raids). The organizations also selected participants representing government (ministries, police and army), local and national civil society organizations, and international actors (UN agencies, international NGOs).
- Interview over 300 participants in over 12 localities
- Summarise the results in form of a report
- Present the report to local security actors (government and police) and discuss the findings with them

The assessment helped to better understand the different layers of the conflict (intra-ethnic, inter-ethnic, tribes vs. state actors) involve the local community in violence reduction strategies and change the perception of community security needs among the state actors.

## Nepal: Business and Security

*Written with Joe Whitaker*

The 2006 Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) brought an end to a decade of civil war in Nepal, but the implementation of law and order still remains weak. Local businesses in particular suffer from interference by members of the political system. They are often subject to intimidation, forced donations and manipulated tender bidding, imposed by political parties and their associated organisations. Youth organisations have joined in some of these practices, frequently asking shop owners for payments and, in case these are not granted, damaging or destroying their premises. Merchants are also affected by commercial disruptions due to frequent strikes, labour unrest, and traffic accidents. In absence of effective police control, some business owners resort to employing private security agents that use excessive violence, which in turn causes fears among the wider public.

The impact of instability and insecurity on businesses and their potential to contribute to this situation in Nepal makes them an important stakeholder for efforts to increase public security. For this reason International Alert, an organisation that helps people find peaceful solutions to conflict, partnered with National Business Initiative (NBI), an NGO formed by 14 Nepali business associations and individual companies working to strengthen the role and capacity of the Nepali private sector, to contribute to peace. Their joint project was part of a larger initiative called “Enabling Civil Society to Contribute to More Effective, Inclusive and Accountable Public Security Policies and Programming.” The aim was to engage with district and national level police forces, related government agencies and local business owners in six districts in the country’s Terai region – a hub for manufacturing businesses – to find ways to improve public security.

### Setting Up Working Groups for Joint Security Initiatives at the District-Level

In each of the target districts, International Alert first trained members of the local chamber of commerce on conflict-sensitive communication, human rights and conflict transformation and then supported them to set up a working group with senior representatives of the local police and local government representatives. The groups met regularly to discuss current security challenges and come up with practical solutions. International Alert then provided seed funding to implement the solutions. For example, in one of the districts the group was able to hire night watchmen and install CCTV monitors to better monitor activities in the market in the largest town. In other districts, they were able to provide fuel for police vehicles or other equipment such as metal detectors to police staff so that they could increase patrols and perform more effective searches of suspects.

#### The challenge

Malpractices such as forced donations and gang violence affect the security of local businesses and the community as a whole.

#### Theory of change:

Enabling business owners and the police to jointly plan local public security initiatives broadens local ownership and enables more legitimate and effective security strategies.

### Advocacy at the District and National level

International Alert supported the working groups in the six districts to come together on the sub-regional level and define common security priorities. A national workshop was also organised during which business representatives could discuss their security needs with police and government representatives, and a series of public slogans promoting improved public security were agreed for later dissemination. Business representatives also met high-level political decision-makers one to one, prepared press releases and appeared in TV and radio broadcasted interviews. As a result of these efforts, members of several major political parties

made public commitments to address security issues affecting businesses. For example, they pledged to clamp down on party cadres demanding donations.

This project highlights the interconnectedness of private and public security needs and the need for the “whole of society” to participate in peacebuilding initiatives aimed at improving human security. Businesses and communities realised that malpractices such as forced donations or gang violence constituted a threat to everybody and needed to be addressed in collaboration with police and other government actors in order to establish a safe operating and living environment for the entire community.

## Kenya: Preventing Youth Violence

*Written with Zahra Ismail*

Despite the relatively peaceful 2013 general elections, violence has been a regular feature in Kenyan politics, especially in times of voting. Elections bring out deep-seated, historical grievances on distribution of land, resources and political power between tribes echoing from a colonial past. Violence in Kenya peaked around the 2007/2008 elections that led to 1,200 deaths and 500,000 to flee their homes. Since then, national policy-makers have been giving more attention to the security sector focusing on new policies that aim to address and prevent human rights violations by security providers.

Violence is especially prevalent in urban areas that are increasingly densely populated but characterised by growing poverty and inequality and a high percentage of youths. Young people can be the most affected but also the most responsible for local forms of urban violence. In three particularly vulnerable communities in Nairobi - Mathare, Korogocho and Kibera – youth are often involved in crimes and associated with gangs but they also suffer from intimidation, forceful recruitment or rape committed by members of criminal gangs, and security actors. Run-ins with the police have also resulted in disappearances and extra-judicial killings by security forces. Because many of the youths who engaged in violence lack employment, the police and larger communities demonised them as lazy and criminal. In contrast, the youths saw the police as extremely threatening due to their reputation as brutal and corrupt.

### **The challenge**

There are high levels of violence and hostile attitudes between youth and local police.

### **Theory of change:**

If youths are able to take on positive roles within their community and have the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with police officers, joint initiatives to prevent violence and improve human security at the local level will be possible.

To improve the tenuous relationship between youth and security actors in these communities, the University of San Diego's Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ), an organisation that works to improve practice, policy and scholarship in peacebuilding and human rights, collaborated with two local NGOs, Cista Kenya and Chemchemi Ya Ukweli, both community-based peacebuilding organisations in Nairobi that work in communities that have been impacted by extreme violence following the post-election violence of 2007-8. The primary goal of this small-scale project was to increase security by changing attitudes. In order to reverse the hostile stereotypes youths and police had constructed of each other, IPJ launched some of the following activities:



**Photo 19: Youth leaders with a facilitator of one of IPJ's local partner organizations. Photo credit: Zahra Ismail.**

scenarios of violence within the community and how to remedy them. IPJ and its partners helped them to prioritise security challenges and think of strategies and partners with which they could resolve them. These individuals then went back into their communities and trained 40 of their peers forming a pool of so-called “youth ambassadors.” The ambassadors were made up of peace activists, former gang members or other community members. They came up with a series of innovative violence reduction projects in which they involved other youths from Korogocho. Projects included computer skill workshops, film clubs, job creation activities, or community development projects such as building homes for elderly people. A few months later, IPJ and its partners organised a follow-up workshop in which the ambassadors came together, updated each other on their projects and thought about ways to further improve security in Korogocho, including how to improve their relations with the police. This programme was useful in giving youth confidence that they can be agents of positive change and helped correct their image as hooligans.

### **A Joint Forum on Working Together to Prevent Violence**

IPJ, Cista Kenya and Chemchemi Ya Ukweli co-hosted and facilitated a two-day forum entitled *Building Alliances: Working Together to Prevent Violence*. It brought 100 youth and community participants together with high-level police and government as well as CSOs. Since the levels of apprehension and fear among the youths were so high, the purpose of this forum was simply to give each side a first opportunity to recognise the challenges the other side is facing. Police representatives presented their role and responsibilities and youths shared their violence reduction initiatives. This exchange helped both sides to get a better understanding of each other and reconsider their biases.

In the future, IPJ hopes to deepen dialogue between the youth and the police, beginning with independent dialogues among only youth and only police. This will allow them to identify the issues, face their own stereotypes, and decide how they, as a force, want to work with and engage communities together. The police are motivated in doing so because they desire a better reputation.

This project illustrates how peacebuilding approaches can build capacity, create spaces, and provide incentives for police actors and civil society to come together and jointly work towards improving human security.



**Photo 20: The youth participants of the two-day forum for police-youth dialogue. Photo: Zahra Ismail**

## Bi-lateral workshops between security actors and civil society in Nepal

In Nepal, IPJ has participated in community peacebuilding activities for over thirteen years bringing together civil society, political leaders, and defence and security actors. IPJ provides training and workshops on negotiation, communication and conflict resolution for each group separately, but they also implement bi-lateral workshops during which different actors, for example representatives of civilian organizations and police officers, can engage in dialogue. The bi-lateral workshops often include a skill-building component, an opportunity to think more strategically about how to engage with the other side, as well as space to begin conversations and collaborate on resolving specific issues.

## Lebanon: Building Trust Between Police and Local communities

*Written with Lena Slachmuis*

Decades of civil war and regional conflict have resulted in few opportunities for the country to rally around a comprehensive security sector reform process. As a result, there is a trust deficit between civil society and the security sector, with the Internal Security Forces (ISF) often perceived as corrupt, biased or inefficient in their role of protecting local communities.

Recognizing this, the Lebanese government together with international partners decided to pilot a programme in one neighbourhood in central Beirut, Hbeish, with the aim of transforming the Ras Beirut Police Station into a 'model Police Station'. By the time that SFCG began partnering with the station, they had already adopted a code of conduct based on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Standards and changed their recruitment and training policies in order to ensure their officers are properly trained. The ISF also set up new and easily accessible facilities and introduced regular patrols on foot, vehicle and bike as well as a digital database to collect and analyse security incidents. These organisational changes had built skills within the police to better be able to engage with the community. Yet there was little opportunity for police and community members to actually build direct human relationships with each and restore their mutual trust.

Search for Common Ground's programme 'Better Together', in partnership with the Ras Beirut Police Station aimed thus to build healthy relationships with the local community and strengthen the effectiveness of the police officers in protecting the community.

### The challenge

There were tensions between security forces and local communities.

### Theory of change:

Build trust between groups through joint capacity building, dialogue, and joint programming.

### Building Skills for Trust-building; Separately, then Together

The Ras Beirut community is situated nearby large universities, where perceptions towards the ISF were very negative. SFCG knew that bringing together people from the community with the ISF in a face to face meeting or town hall meeting would likely end with confrontation and deepening of mistrust.

SFCG thus started by reaching out to various student and young organisations, to explain the project and identify people who were interested in gradually growing their engagement with the ISF. At first, there was deep suspicion and rejection by many young people. But SFCG was

gradually able to draw the young people into the project, starting by building skills for the young people in citizen engagement and Common Ground leadership and advocacy, with an emphasis on identifying areas of commonalities with ‘the other’.

SFCG then trained nominated ISF members from Ras Beirut in skills around non-violent communication, mediation and conflict transformation. They also became familiar with methods of social media outreach, to improve their ability to communicate with the community.

### **Trust-building through Open House and Joint Patrols**

SFCG recognised that many of the stereotypes held both by the youth and the ISF were due to past negative experiences, and misperceptions about the real role and responsibilities of the ISF. SFCG worked with the ISF to host open-house days where members of the community could come in and learn about the Ras Beirut station, and talk to police officers. Many community members had never before been in the police station, or had had negative experiences in the past. The ISF also invited a group of young people to shadow them on night patrols in the neighbourhood, which was an eye-opening experience for the youth, and a humanizing and trust-building success.



**Photo 21: Shadow patrols with youth from Beirut alongside police from the ISF Ras Beirut station.**  
Photo Credit: Search For Common Ground

### **Roundtable Discussions and Joint Problem Solving Workshops**

After several months of working with the groups separately, SFCG facilitated a series of round table discussions. While recognizing that many of the participants still felt a need to express their anger, trauma or distrust of the other group, the facilitation gradually moved the group towards the identification of challenges within the community, which they could tackle together. Issues identified included how to tackle small café owners who put their tables and chairs on the street illegally, how to manage waste, and how to put in place a mobile application for citizens to be able to alert the Police Station when they see suspicious or criminal behaviour.

Through a series of five round tables, the relationship was developed to the point that in order to achieve progress on the above ideas, both the ISF and the community identified and contributed resources to move them forward. A *WhatsApp* group was created to enable on-going dialogue and collaboration to reach these goals.

## Community Outreach

Once the bridges of trust had been built between the ISF and the young people along with other community leaders, they jointly organised other public outreach activities. This included sports and cultural events, as well as setting up stands at large public Beirut street festivals (for example the Hamra Festival). The group also produced leaflets and posters to communicate the community security focus of the police station, and group representatives appeared on local media to talk about their initiatives.



**Photo 22: Community members and ISF members hold a stand at the Hamra festival in central Beirut, explaining the role of the police. Photo Credit: Search for Common Ground**

Through the trainings, joint activities, round tables and public outreach, trust gradually began to overcome the mistrust and fear. In the end, the pilot project to demonstrate how the Ras Beirut Police station could become a 'model police' station showed signs of becoming reality, as both police officers and community members understood and acted on their joint sense of responsibility for bringing this idea to reality.

## Tanzania: Safety Around Mining Sites

*With Lena Slachmujlder and Patricia Loreskar*

Acacia Mining (then African Barrick Gold), one of the largest gold producers in the world, operates gold mines in Tanzania, including in the remote areas of Mara and Shinyanga Provinces. Although its operations were authorised since 2002 by the Tanzanian government, the company has been unable to protect the mine from intrusions by members of the local community.

The intruders were trying to steal gold or get access to ancestral territory. There was implicit support for the intruders by the local community; many felt the company was not investing enough in community development, was not hiring local staff, and had not properly compensated people years back. When the intrusions became more frequent, Acacia Mining hired Tanzanian police and private security companies to try and protect the mine from the intruders.

This further polarised relationships between the company and the community, who accused the police of

### The challenge

There were tensions between the communities surrounding a mining site and the security forces protecting the mine.

### Theory of change:

Joint capacity building and joint assessment of the challenges built trust between groups.

corruption and extortion. The violence increased, and the police responded with excessive force. One day, thousands of intruders armed with machetes tried to invade the mine; the resulting clash led to many deaths and serious injuries.

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) partnered with Acacia Mining in 2011, using the framework of the Voluntary Principles of Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) to strengthen the company's efforts to improve relationships with local communities.

SFCG's initiative aimed to open channels for raising grievances, sharing accurate information, and enabling collaborative problem solving. SFCG also identified skills to build across the different stakeholders, including conflict transformation, common ground advocacy, rumour management and leadership. These trainings enabled the different stakeholder groups to be ready and prepared for the face-to-face meetings with each other.

SFCG organised and facilitated meetings with local village elders, religious leaders, sub-village and hamlet leaders, local police, Acacia Mining security and community relations staff, and local and district-level government representatives. Women, youth, and other marginalised groups were also engaged.



**Photo 23: A community meeting in Tanzania with community members, local government leaders, and members of Acacia mining. Photo Credit: Search for Common Ground**

Through facilitated dialogue, the various parties were able to understand each other's concerns and identify joint strategies to act upon. Of particular concern was the violence around the incursions and the response by the police and the security companies. A solution to this was identified and agreed upon: the hiring of men from the local village as security guards. The selection process of the guards was managed by the village elders and it was agreed that the

guards would re-invest ten per cent of their income back into village development. It was also agreed to train the local police on how to manage situations without resorting to violence as a first reaction. Through the project, SFCG trained 1,500 police officers, 300 key community decision-makers, 1,500 women and 1,500 youth.

The renewed sense of trust and collaboration was reinforced and highlighted through community outreach, including participatory theatre and sports tournaments reaching more than 13,000 women, men and youth. By 2015, Acacia Mining reported that there was a significant drop in violence around the mine.

## Pakistan: Bridging Traditional Justice with Policing

Written with Ali Gohar

Since the inception of the state of Pakistan in 1947, formal criminal justice procedures were imposed upon local people without attempting to understand or integrate the long-standing traditional justice systems. But since the imposed state justice system is often weak and not able to provide redress to victims of abuse, non-state justice traditions continue to exist and often compete with state structures. As a consequence, the formal sector has little control over the informal sector and cannot correct for discriminatory attitudes among traditional judges nor impose formal punishment for serious crimes. In Pakistan, a local civil society organisation working for justice and peace through conflict transformation methods called Just Peace Initiatives (JPI) uses peacebuilding skills and processes to build a bridge between the state justice and tribal justice systems.

### The challenge

There is a gap between tribal and state justice and security.

### Theory of change:

Create opportunities with the police and tribal leaders to bridge tribal and state justice and security processes.

The Pukhtoon tribe, uses a traditional justice system called *jirga*. The *jirga* is part of the cultural guidance known as Pukhtoonwali that dates back 5,000 years for the Pukhtoon tribes in Pakistan. Even a minor conflict in the Pukhtoon belt can lead to infliction of shame, loss of honour, taunting, or even violence. According to Pukhtoonwali, the *jirga* is a council of elders or “grey beard elders,” usually men, known locally for their impartiality, wisdom, and religious and traditional knowledge.

There are many types of *jirga*, for both minor and major conflicts from family disputes all the way to the *loya jirga* at the national level. When people in conflict approach *jirga* members or *jirgamar* individually, the *jirgamar* conduct shuttle diplomacy to bring the people together into



Photo 24: Jirga dialogue. Photo Credit: Just Peace Initiatives

a circle to discuss the issue and look for options for resolution. Ideally, the *jirgamar* sit together in a circle and first let all conflict parties present their issues. Each *jirgamar* shares their views one by one until they reach a collective decision with consensus.

JPI is encouraging police and *jirga* members to find common ground between state laws and religious and traditional values of human rights values. Likewise, JPI emphasises common ground between tribal and modern processes of dialogue, mediation, reconciliation, and restorative justice.

JPI works to update the *jirga* to face modern challenges and minimise pressure on the government departments. They supported the set-up of *Muslahathi* (Reconciliation) Committees that represent a new and updated version of *jirga* operating in police stations in 23 districts out of 25 districts of the Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa region in Pakistan. In collaboration with the Federal Investigating Agency of the Government of Pakistan (FIA), JPI arranged for the first international conference on *Jirga as a Restorative Justice System* in 2003. In 2008–2010, JPI conducted trainings for more than 1,000 community elders, 500 police officers, and 350 civil societies' members, 300 women activists, and 100 non-governmental organisation workers to implement the *Muslahathi* Committees in the most violent province of Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa of Pakistan. JPI also researched the *jirga* in Pakistan and Afghanistan and published their findings in a publication titled "*Towards Understanding Pukhtoon Jirga as an Indigenous Way of Peace-building and More.*" Other Pakistani provinces are now replicating the *Muslahathi* Committee to help the *jirga* adapt and change.

JPI also supports the *Muslahathi* Committees to enable them to better address gender-based violence. Each reconciliation committee is mandated to include three women, which is an unprecedented step for a country like Pakistan. Where the traditions are strong, elderly women represent younger women or a *jirga* process may take place in the privacy of a home to resolve cases of gender-based violence within the community. Some elders prefer to resolve cases involving women in the community outside the police station as they see women's participation



**Photo 25: Just Peace Initiatives joint training for police and tribal elders. Photo Credit: Ali Gohar**

and presence in a police station as culturally inappropriate. But traditions are changing. In 2013, a group of Pakistani women used the first all-woman's *jirga* to advocate for their rights in Swat Valley, in a case where a husband and in-laws burned a woman with acid.<sup>44</sup>

JPI is strengthening the *Muslahathi* Committees work on a variety of social issues. They encourage police and tribal leaders to work together on criminal cases or develop plans to help criminal juveniles reintegrate into their schools.

JPI also advances public knowledge on the complementarity of tribal and state justice systems. It produced TV and radio shows on the *Muslahathi* Committees as well as a dozen booklets on aspects of local indigenous system of *jirga*, the Pukhtoon code of life (Pakhtoonwali), or the Hujra (a community based indigenous community centre in which the *jirga* resides). Finally, JPI undertakes national level research on how the informal justice systems are working in Pakistan.