



EGAP STORIES OF CHANGE

CAN COMMUNITY POLICING INCREASE DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND PUBLIC TRUST?

LESSONS FROM PAKISTAN

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IN GOVERNANCE
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The Metaketa Initiative is a **collaborative research model** with a mission to improve knowledge about critical governance issues through **rigorous field experiments**. In each Metaketa "round," the initiative coordinates multiple studies on a specific topic or intervention in a variety of countries and contexts.

The fourth Metaketa round focused on **community policing**, with studies in six countries assessing the effects of community policing programs on building citizen trust in police and reducing crime. Here we share the story of an experiment in **Pakistan** where researchers tested the efficacy of two variants of community problem-oriented policing, a citizen-centric problem-oriented (CPOP) model and a gender inclusive variant of CPOP (CPOP-G).

The Metaketa Initiative is led by Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP) at the University of California, Berkeley. It is partially funded by the UK's Department for International Development and involves a global network of researchers conducting studies in countries around the world.

PROJECT COUNTRY: PAKISTAN



PROJECT TIMELINE

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BASELINE: MARCH-APRIL 2018
INTERVENTION: MARCH 2019
ENDLINE: AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2019



Participants at a monthly community policing forum.

THE CHALLENGE

Reducing crime and insecurity is a top priority in the developing world. Mitigating these issues requires strong police institutions and cooperation between police officers and citizens. However, in many countries, the police are the least trusted government institution. This hinders their ability to provide public safety, legitimacy, and stability in the community, as well as be effective at prosecuting crimes.

Take Pakistan, for example. In Wave 6 of the World Values survey, only 20% of Pakistani respondents said they trusted the police “A great deal” or “Quite a lot,” compared to 29% in Nigeria and 27% in Peru. Additionally, this number pales in comparison to the percentage of respondents who trust Pakistan’s religious institutions (97.1%) and the army (83.4%). As such, there remains a great deal of potential to improve policing by building trust and creating avenues for improved police-citizen communications.

Community policing programs are one way to potentially improve police-citizen communication. The idea of strengthening ties between the community and police was formally introduced into Pakistan’s laws by the Police Order of 2002 (Khosa 2015). Subsequent police reforms recognized the potential of community policing, but did not institutionalize it. Over the past five years though, regional and district officers within the Police Service in Punjab have been experimenting with community policing.

“CAN POLICE-COMMUNITY MEETINGS IMPROVE PUBLIC TRUST IN THE POLICE?”



A member of the community speaks during a monthly community policing forum.

RESEARCH DESIGN



Participants wait for the monthly community policing forum to begin.

INTERVENTION THAT INCLUDED A PACKAGE OF CPOP AND CPOP-G MODELS

Intervention that included a package of citizen-centric problem-oriented community policing (CPOP) and a gender-inclusive version of the citizen-centric model (CPOP-G). Researchers Ali Cheema (IDEAS and LUMS), Ali Hasanain (LUMS), and Jacob N. Shapiro (Princeton University) and police officer Zulfiqar Hameed teamed up with the Regional Police Office in Sheikhpura and the District Police Officers of Sheikhpura and Nankana districts to conduct a study that rigorously tested the efficacy of two models of community policing:

- 1.) A citizen-centric problem-oriented model community policing (CPOP)
- 2.) A gender-inclusive variant of CPOP (CPOP-G)

CPOP introduced dedicated community police officers trained in

modern problem-oriented policing methods at the beat level. These officers were responsible for holding monthly community policing forums in their beats. The purpose of the forums was to document information on community problems from citizens and use this information to devise prevention strategies that were agreed between the team of officers and members of the community in the form of Community Policing Plans (CPPs). In CPOP-G, the CPOP intervention was complemented by introducing specialized forums for women and adding a female constable to each dedicated beat-level team. The efficacy of these models was tested using a randomized-control-trial design that randomly assigned 108 police beats to the two treatment arms (CPOP and CPOP-G) and a control arm where status-quo policing practices were followed.

RESULTS

Community Problem Oriented Policing (CPOP) led to a 35 percent increase in citizen satisfaction with the police, a 45 percent increase in citizen beliefs that police have good intentions with respect to addressing crime, a 6 percent increase in citizen's norms of cooperation with the police, and an 11 percent decrease in feelings of insecurity. Even in a short period, holding regular community-police meetings substantially increased trust and citizens' beliefs about police intentions and reduced citizens' levels of fear.

But CPOP did not reduce crime. Administrative data from the police showed no difference in crime trends between CPOP beats and either control beats or beats that were not part of the evaluation sample. Self-reported crime victimization also did not drop in CPOP beats compared to control beats.

While the CPOP-G, the second treatment arm, had only been running two months by the midline, it did allow a comparison of issues raised in standard community meetings vs. female-oriented meetings. Women raised a very different set of concerns than men. They were more likely to focus on issues such as child abuse, domestic abuse, and traffic problems. In the men only forums, issues were focused around social disorders related to drugs, land disputes, and gambling. On average, the study found that 81 percent of female attendees and 63 percent of male attendees reported being satisfied with these forums.

45%

Citizens' beliefs that police have good intentions increased by 45 percent.

35%

Citizens' satisfaction with the police increased by 35 percent.

LESSONS + IMPACT

Perhaps the most important lesson learned from this study is that police-community meetings can have a substantive impact on police-citizen cooperation. These meetings clearly created a mechanism for the community to share information with the police. They improved citizens' satisfaction with the police, their beliefs about police intentions, and their willingness to cooperate.

However, these meetings did not impact citizens' views about police capacity and they did not lead to a reduction in crime. These null effects may be because the police were unable to address many of the issues raised in

the meetings. It is possible that CPOP would have led to greater changes in crime if the meetings had been combined with appropriate resources to enable a coordinated response by the local government to the issues raised.

The research team worked with the Punjab Inspector General of the Police and kept him abreast of the intervention and results of the study. The Inspector General shared the results of the project with the Prime Minister of Pakistan, who saw value in the study and has formally approved community-police meetings to become a standard part of policing in the province.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

As researchers and practitioners continue to study community policing, here are a few questions for further consideration:

- Can community policing be used effectively by new and reconstituted police forces in contexts in which the legitimacy of the state is challenged?
- What are strategies for reducing insecurity between citizens and the police?
- What factors contribute to insecurity between citizens and the police?
- Does community involvement increase police accountability?
- Do the specific concerns of women citizens warrant a different design of the community policing intervention?
- What types of resources do police officers need to follow up on the kinds of issues raised in community meetings, and would doing so lead to lower crime?

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LEARN MORE

For additional information and technical details about this study, visit the [project webpage](#).

For more on the researcher / implementing partner relationship, read [Partnership Lessons 11: Pakistan Community Policing with the Institute Of Development and Economic Alternatives](#).

Explore other projects in the [Metaketa IV round](#).

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