Effects of Community Policing Programs in Reducing Urban Crimes in Dodoma City, Tanzania

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Abstract: Tanzania continues to face various security problems, especially in Dodoma City, where numerous incidents threatening peace and safety have been frequently reported. In turn, this study investigated the effects of community policing programs used to reduce urban crimes and improve security in Dodoma City, Chang'ombe ward, Tanzania. Methodologically, the study employed a mixed-methods approach. It employed random and purposive sampling techniques to select 143 respondents from the study area. The findings indicate that community policing has a significant impact on improving security and reducing crime. Key outcomes of community policing initiatives implemented in Dodoma City, particularly in Chang'ombe Ward, include increased community participation in safety (53.80%), youth engagement and reduction of gang activities (68.40%), and enhanced crime reporting (58.80%). Moreover, trust between police and community members (55.20%) and a reduction in petty crimes (62.30%) were noted as critical benefits. Over half of the respondents (50.4%) recognized community policing's role in promoting sustainable urban development, advocating for a secure environment conducive to socio-economic progress. However, the analysis also highlighted areas needing improvement, particularly in early crime detection and police-community collaboration. The study concludes that when effectively established, community policing programs foster peace, safety, and urban development by enhancing law enforcement-citizen collaboration, facilitating crime detection, and reducing residents' fear of crime. The recommendations offered include: institutionalizing community policing with formal policies, integrating it into urban safety frameworks, reforming volunteer policing models, establishing community feedback mechanisms, enhancing police visibility, expanding youth engagement programs, and promoting partnerships among stakeholders.

Keywords: Community-Led Policing, Volunteer Policing, Urban Crimes, Police Visibility, Security Problems, Peace and Safety.

1. Introduction

Urban crime has become a significant challenge worldwide, particularly in rapidly growing cities. As urban populations expand and migration to cities intensifies, the associated risks of crime also increase. According to the report by the World Bank (2022), cities, which are home to more than half of the global population, encounter a disproportionate share of crimes, encompassing both violent and property-related offenses. These crimes are often fueled by factors such as poverty, unemployment, and social inequality. Global crime patterns have shifted, with rising concerns over cybercrime, drug trafficking, and gang violence, which all altogether, are significantly affecting urban safety, security, and stability.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2022) points out that effective crime prevention strategies, including community policing, can significantly help in reducing crime rates through fostering collaboration between citizens and law enforcement officers. The concept of community policing, which emphasizes cooperation, transparency, and mutual respect, has gained traction as an effective model for addressing urban crime. Evidence from cities like New York and London has demonstrated that the initiatives can help strengthen community trust and improve crime prevention outcomes by involving citizens directly in the policing process (Pelfrey, 2021). Experience in Africa has also indicated that urban crime is increasingly becoming a pressing concern as cities experience rapid population growth, often outpacing the development of infrastructure and public services. The report provided by the African Development Bank (2021) indicated that African cities, though home to dynamic economies, are grappling with rising crime rates, including violent crimes, theft, and drug-related offenses.

Factors such as unemployment, inadequate law enforcement, and weak governance structures aggravate crime in urban areas. In response, many African countries have started implementing community policing strategies to address these issues. The South African Police Service, for example, introduced community policing forums (CPF) as part of a broader strategy to engage local communities in crime prevention (De Klerk & Tisani, 2020). While these initiatives have had mixed results, evidences suggest that community policing can be effective in strengthening trust between the police and communities, leading to better crime reporting and prevention.

Tanzania, like many other African countries, is also experiencing an increase in urbanization, with many cities, including the City of Dodoma, expanding rapidly. However, this rapid urbanization has been accompanied by rising crime rates in most major cities. The National Crime Prevention Strategy (2020) in Tanzania highlights that crime in urban areas is primarily driven by factors such as youth unemployment, poverty, and inadequate policing resources. In response to this, the Tanzanian government has embraced community policing as a strategy to reduce crime, particularly in urban settings. The Tanzania Police Force launched community policing initiatives in the late 1990s, with a strong emphasis on building partnerships between the police and the communities they serve.

According to a report by the Police Force (2021), community policing efforts have led to improved cooperation between the police and residents, resulting in increased crime reporting and a more proactive approach to crime prevention. However, challenges such as limited training for police officers, inadequate funding, and community mistrust in law enforcement have hindered the effectiveness of these programs. Nonetheless, various studies have shown that community policing can be a powerful tool in the fight against urban crime in Tanzania, especially when aligned with local contexts and supported by adequate resources (Mbaraka, 2022).

Dodoma, the capital city of Tanzania, has witnessed significant growth in recent years, ultimately contributing to increased crime rates, particularly in urban centers like Chang'ombe Ward. As the City expands, the rise in population density has also led to social tensions, with issues such as unemployment, poverty, and inadequate housing becoming more prevalent. According to the Dodoma Municipal Council's Annual Report (2022), crime rates in the City have increased, particularly in peripheral areas such as Chang'ombe Ward, where economic opportunities are limited. This rise in crime has prompted local authorities to emphasize community policing as a strategy to improve security in urban settings. However, despite the reported successes, many incidents that disturb peace and security within the mentioned city have been persistently reported, which raises questions regarding the potential of community policing in reducing urban crime in the City of Dodoma.

1.1   Statement of the Problem

Despite the implementation of community policing that aimed at reducing crime rates, Tanzania has encountered several security challenges, particularly in Dodoma City, where incidents against peace and security have been widely reported. Recent attacks on government officials, police, and religious institutions in Dar-Es-Salaam, Mwanza, and Morogoro, alongside some reported incidents of violence in Zanzibar, underline the ongoing urban crime challenges. Besides, reports have indicated an upsurge in criminal cases in Dodoma City from 945 in 2020-2021 to 1,215 in 2022-2023, which reveals a significant disconnect between community policing efforts and the actual crime trends within the cities. Additionally, despite several studies related to urban crime and community policing in the country, there remains a huge lack of detailed information regarding its effectiveness in cities like Dodoma, which prompted further investigation into the contributions of community policing programs to urban crime reduction, having focused on Chang'ombe Ward.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

The study was guided by two theories, namely the routine activity theory and the Crime Prevention Theory, whose descriptions are provided in this section.

2.1.1 The Routine Activity Theory

The Routine Activity Theory, established by Cohen and Felson in 1979, proclaims that crime happens when a motivated offender, a suitable target, and an absence of capable guardianship converge. This theory highlights the impact of daily routines and societal structures on crime rates, thus influencing modern criminological research and crime prevention strategies. It proposes practical applications by describing crime patterns based on visible elements like time, location, and opportunity, hence enabling effective design of targeted interventions designed to reduce crime opportunities. Nevertheless, the theory has limitations, including oversimplifying criminal behaviours and neglecting offenders' motivations and wider socio-economic factors. In Chang'ombe Ward, the theory aligns perfectly with community policing strategies by helping to analyze routine activities and the absence of guardianship in identifying high-crime areas and times, ultimately supporting interventions like increased police visibility and community collaboration for effective guardianship, thereby minimizing urban crime opportunities in cities such as Dodoma.

2.1.2 Crime Prevention Theory 1971

The theory was developed by C. Ray Jeffery in 1971 and later expanded by Oscar Newman (Jeffery, 1971). It posits that urban design and environmental modifications can reduce crimes by making spaces less attractive to offenders. The theory focuses on natural surveillance, access control, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance as key principles for crime prevention. The theory has significantly influenced urban planning and crime prevention policies worldwide. The strength lies in its practical approach to reducing crime through environmental modifications, such as improved lighting, security cameras, and strategic urban planning (Cozens & Love, 2015). However, its limitation is on dependency on infrastructure improvements, which may not always be feasible due to financial constraints (Armitage, 2021). The theory aligns with this study by helping to analyze how environmental modifications in Chang'ombe Ward influence crime prevention.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 The National Strategy on Community Policing

Tanzania's National Strategy on Community Policing is a deliberate transition from conventional, reactive law enforcement towards a partnership-based model that actively involves citizens in the co-production of security. The policy's central principles strongly emphasize partnership, organizational transformation, and problem-solving, ultimately transforming the role of law enforcement officers from merely being enforcers to collaborators. Since its inception in 2006, this strategy has played a significant role in guiding the Tanzania Police Force (TPF) in the integration of community policing practices in its daily operations (Malisa, 2020). This strategic shift is particularly significant in the context of the current study, which focused on the "Contribution of Community Policing in Reducing Urban Crimes in Dodoma City: A Case of Chang'ombe Ward," as it positions community members in Chang'ombe not just as passive bystanders or victims, but rather as active partners in influencing neighbourhood safety.

This policy can be operationalized in Chang'ombe Ward through the establishment of ward-level community policing committees and promoting regular, structured platforms where the Chang'ombe residents and police officers will collaborate to identify crime locations, exchange local knowledge, and develop robust crime prevention strategies. The usefulness of such engagement is underlined by empirical evidence from other parts of Tanzania. For instance, research conducted in Mkuranga District has indicated that community policing interventions, including foot patrols, public education programs, and community meetings, have helped to improve crime prevention efforts and promote social unity (Mohamed, 2023; Salehe, 2024.

2.2.2 The Tanzania Police Force Reform Program (TPFRP)

The Tanzania Police Force Reform Program (TPFRP) was initiated to modernize and professionalize the police service, specifically through improving accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to community needs. This reform aimed to transform the police from a militarized, command-driven organization into a service-oriented institution that prioritizes and values community partnership and human rights (URT, 2018). In the context of Dodoma City and Chang'ombe Ward, the TPFRP is critical because it provides the structural and operational

foundation that enables community policing efforts to flourish, ensuring police officers are better equipped and motivated to work collaboratively with residents in order to reduce urban crimes.

Various studies have indicated that police reforms through supporting community policing help to improve trust and cooperation, which are essential for effective crime prevention in urban areas, specifically those characterized by high population density and social challenges (Makoye & Kibona, 2021; Mshana, 2022). This translates into increased crime reporting, faster response times, and joint problem-solving, all of which might contribute to reducing urban crimes in Chang'ombe Ward.

The TPFRP also promotes the adoption of modern technologies and improved logistical support to increase police efficiency and accountability. In Chang'ombe Ward, this has translated to the introduction of communication tools, data management systems, and patrol resources that enable police to monitor crime trends more effectively and engage with the community through digital platforms (URT, 2019; Nchimbi, 2023). The reform program has strengthened the police's ability to act proactively, not just reactively, creating safer urban environments and fostering sustained collaboration between the police and residents.

2.2.3 The Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy (CVPS)

The Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy (CVPS) in Tanzania is a comprehensive national framework aimed at reducing crime and violence through multisectoral collaboration, prevention-focused interventions, and community involvement. The strategy acknowledges that sustainable crime reduction requires addressing the root causes, such as poverty, unemployment, and social inequality, alongside strengthening law enforcement (URT, 2020). In the context of Dodoma City and specifically Chang'ombe Ward, CVPS provides a foundation for integrating community policing efforts with broader social development programs to create safer urban environments.

At the ward level, such as the current study area, i.e., Chang'ombe, the CVPS framework encourages collaboration between police, local government, civil society, and community members to implement targeted interventions such as youth engagement programs, conflict resolution initiatives, and public awareness campaigns. Research indicates that such holistic approaches not only reduce crime rates but also

strengthen social cohesion and community resilience against violence (Mwakyusa & Mbwana, 2022; Simba, 2023).

2.2.4 Community policing strategies used in reducing urban crimes

Sampson and Raudenbush (2021) conducted a study that focused on assessing the dimensions of effective community policing in America. The study found that neighbourhoods with high levels of community participation in policing demonstrated lower crime rates and greater social cohesion than those which have lower community engagement. The study ultimately concluded that social networks and collective effectiveness promoted through community policing contribute significantly to crime prevention, which underlines the importance of community engagement in solving the challenge of urban crimes.

Tuffin et al. (2020) conducted a study published in the *Policing & Society Journal.* The study reported that community policing helped substantially in reducing disorderly conduct and fear of crime in the community, and the study concluded that citizen engagement in problem-solving played a critical role in crime reduction. Mhlanga (2019) conducted a study in South Africa that examined the effectiveness of community policing in the City of Johannesburg. The study observed that community policing strategies significantly improved cooperation between law enforcement and community members and contributed significantly to a reduction in property crimes.

Dugan and Roberts's (2020) study conducted in the City of Los Angeles in the United States of America supports similar conclusions, having found that community policing programs, involving residents in patrols and neighbourhood watch initiatives, contributed to a 20% reduction in burglary rates in the city. The researchers attributed this result to strengthened community awareness and vigilance facilitated by police engagement.

Jiao's (2023) study in Kenya discovered that strategies such as regular community meetings and officer-led crime prevention trainings contributed to a 15% reduction in crimes over two years and concluded that police transparency and accountability were vital to the success of these crime prevention initiatives.

The report produced by the Association of Chiefs of Police (2023) also concluded that community policing models that are flexible, adaptive, and that put local needs central of their application are more likely to reduce crime

effectively. The report also observed that the integration of technology, including crime mapping and social media engagement, helps to improve the effectiveness of community policing in urban areas, especially in reducing property and drug-related crimes.

In the Tanzanian context, a study by Samwel (2022) demonstrated that community policing helps to promote trust between law enforcement officers and members of communities, thereby improving intelligence gathering. Similarly, Mussa's (2019) study published in the *African Journal of Criminology* reported a significant decline in crime rates due to improved police-community partnership, while Musuguri's (2016) work published in the *Tanzania Journal of Sociology* highlighted that community policing helps to strengthen information sharing, ultimately enabling more effective crime prevention.

Recent experiences in other urban areas also reinforce these findings. For instance, a study by Reynolds (2024), published in the *New Haven Register*, reported an 8% reduction in crimes in Hamden after the introduction of community engagement programs. Additionally, a study by Davis (2024), published in the *Houston Chronicle*, reported that a collaborative program between police officers and pastors in Houston contributed to effectively reduced youth crimes in the area. Likewise, a study by Cleary (2024), conducted in Ireland and published in *The Times*, highlighted how a mixture of high-visibility policing and a pro-arrest strategy substantially improved public safety in the City of Dublin.

2.2.5 Effects of community policing in reducing urban crimes

Several studies have been conducted and focused on the African context. For instance, a study by Okoth (2021) conducted in Nairobi, Kenya, observed that community policing programs resulted in a 22% reduction in crime rates. The study concluded that neighbourhood watch programs and active community engagement contributed to the enhancement of intelligence gathering, ultimately improving crime prevention.

Evidence from Tanzania also supports these findings. For instance, a study undertaken by Mussa (2022), and published in *The Tanzania Law Review*, reported that crime rates in Dar es Salaam dropped by 18% after the introduction of community-led security patrols. A study by Kweka (2023), conducted in Mwanza, Tanzania, and published in *The Tanzania Journal of Law and Justice*, found that community policing in the study location

reduced crime rates by 19% and attributed the experienced decline in crime rates to improved cooperation between law enforcement agencies and local leaders.

Similar findings have been reported in international contexts. For instance, research by Weisburd et al. (2021), conducted in New York City, found that community policing helped to decrease crime rates in neighbourhoods where officers persistently engaged residents through meetings and workshops. The study concluded that sustained relationships between police and communities help to promote trust and boost crime reporting. Similarly, Cleary's (2023) research in the United Kingdom established that community policing in London helped to reduce youth crimes through mentorship programs and strengthened police accountability.

Tilley and Sidebottom (2022) concluded that community policing strategies that concentrated on proactive crime prevention instead of reactionary measures led to a 10–20% reduction in crimes across multiple cities. and concluded that crime reduction depends largely on active public participation, transparency, and police sensitivity to community concerns. Skogan's (2022) study in the United States discovered that U.S. cities with well-established community policing interventions had experienced a 25% decrease in property crimes and a 12% drop in violent crimes.

Moreover, several scholars have highlighted the significance of integrating policing with broader social development strategies. For instance, Sampson and Raudenbush's (2023) study argued that the most noticeable decline in crimes occurred in the cities where community policing was paired with other interventions such as youth employment programs. Piza and Welsh's (2023) study revealed that community policing contributed to an 18% decline in burglary rates in Chicago and Los Angeles and concluded that heightened police-community interactions, supported by data-driven strategies, significantly discouraged criminal activities and improved neighbourhood safety. Similarly, research by Muthoni (2021), conducted in Kampala, Uganda, reported that Kampala neighbourhoods that practiced community policing had experienced a 21% drop in robbery incidents.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2023) concluded that community policing, combined with technological innovations such as crime mapping tools and mobile police applications, contributed substantially to reducing crime rates in the studied areas. Specifically, cities that embraced digital platforms for

crime reporting reported a 30% upsurge in case resolution rates, signifying the evolving role of technology in improving the effectiveness of community policing.

2.3 Knowledge Gap

Despite extensive studies demonstrating the effectiveness of community policing, problem-oriented policing, and technological advancements in addressing urban crimes (Weisburd & Eck, 2021; Braga et al., 2022; Tilley & Sidebottom, 2022), notable gaps still exist in the current literature. For instance, research conducted in the United States and Europe has thoroughly analyzed various crime prevention strategies, including hot-spot policing, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), and intelligence-led policing (Braga et al., 2022; Cleary, 2023; Sherman & Eck, 2023). However, such research in Sub-Saharan Africa is relatively scarce and often fragmented.

Additionally, existing research in Tanzania (Kimaro, 2022; Nyerere & Lema, 2023; Kweka, 2023) and similar studies undertaken in the neighbouring nations such as Kenya and Uganda (Okoth, 2021; Muthoni, 2021) although they provide significant insights in relation to the subject matter, yet they are predominantly limited to case studies, hence lacking extensive comparative or longitudinal examinations. Besides, although Tanzania has generated sizeable research on community policing in cities like Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, and Dodoma (Kimaro, 2022; Nuru, 2020; Kweka, 2023), there has still been no specific study that focused on Chang'ombe Ward. Nevertheless, this ward has unique characteristics, increased population density, vibrant marketplaces, and a mostly young population that may uniquely influence crime trends and the effectiveness of community policing programs, but findings at this micro-level context are missing.

Moreover, most of the reviewed studies lacked sufficient emphasis on understanding community attitudes and trust. The review has noted that the majority of the current literature predominantly relies on police records and institutional data, with limited integration of citizens' lived experiences. The lack of sufficient research addressing these dimensions leaves unanswered questions regarding people's perceptions of safety, community empowerment, and their participation in preventing crimes under the existing policing strategies. Therefore, this study aimed to cover the existing gaps by specifically investigating the contribution of community policing in reducing urban crimes in Dodoma City, using Chang'ombe Ward as a case study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional design to determine the relation between variables. Cross-sectional studies are normally carried out at one time point over a short period; hence, the data is collected at one place (Kate, 2006). The study used this method to mitigate the time limitation while ensuring that the research achieves its key objectives.

3.2 Study Location

The study was conducted in Chang'ombe Ward, located closer to the centre of the City of Dodoma, Tanzania. The area was selected due to the relatively high prevalence of criminal incidents such as robbery, theft, and physical violence. The area allowed for effective sampling and access to deep research information. The reports related to the City of Dodoma's criminal incidents have indicated that, in 2020, criminal activities included 119 killings, 358 rapes, 11 armed robberies, 83 forceful robberies, 637 cases of house battering, and various thefts (Tanzania Police Force, 2021). This reflects a pattern of reported crimes in comparison to 2019, which showed slightly different figures across several categories, highlighting ongoing safety concerns notwithstanding community policing initiatives within the city's urban district (Tanzania Police Force, 2021).

3.3 Study's Target Population

The study targeted household representatives receiving community policing services in Chang'ombe Ward, in Dodoma City. Chang'ombe Ward has 1,785 households receiving community policing services. It also targeted ward police officers because these are expected to work with local government leaders to establish civilian groups called "Polisi jamii" that help to identify and report early every possible circumstance of the occurrence of criminality.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The total sample size of this study was 143 respondents, which included Ward Executive Officers (WEOs), social workers, police desks, Ward police officers, police officers, street chairperson, and the household heads. The sample was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula.

3.4.1 Purposive sampling

This study purposively selected categories of participants, such as 1 Ward Executive Officer, 2 social workers, 3 police desk officers, and 2 general police officers. Each of these categories of participants represented the population with wide-ranging experiences, knowledge, views, and feelings about the contribution of community policing interventions in crime reduction in Tanzania. The selected officers enabled the provision of in-depth and useful information about crime situations in the areas of their jurisdictions and enabled the deployment of ward community policing volunteer officers in their respective areas, which involved civilians making street patrols in their areas and establishing safety and security-related interaction with entire neighborhoods.

3.4.2 Simple random sampling

Simple random sampling was used in this study to select household heads. The techniques provided each of the potential respondents with an equal opportunity to participate in the study. This gave the researcher an accurate picture of the respondents and enabled him to make correct generalizations. Simple random sampling served as an effective tool for achieving the study's key objective of assessing the contributions of community policing to reducing urban crimes, using Chang'ombe as a case study by providing unbiased data on community perspectives and outcomes related to police-community interactions.

3.5 Data collection tools

The study utilized survey questionnaire, the researcher's observation, and document review to collect data. Every question on the questionnaire was designed to specifically address one of the study's research questions. Both closed and open-ended questions were used for collecting primary data. The questions covered topics such as demographic information of the respondents, the effectiveness of community police in reducing crimes, preventive tactics used, crime and problem-solving techniques, and general information regarding crime trends and incidents. By doing this, it was guaranteed that the information gathered was able to address the independent and dependent variables and provided relevant responses to the study's specific objectives and questions.

3.6 Methods for Ensuring Validity and Reliability

3.6.1 Validity of the study

The study used a mixed methods approach and collected data using interview surveys, documentary reviews, and personal observation, which, in summary, ensured the triangulation of the data and was well affirmed by researchers for guaranteeing the study's reliability. Besides, confirmatory factor analysis was used to validate the data. This is a statistical method used to confirm or validate the internal structure of survey data.

3.6.2 Reliability of the study

Pilot-testing of the questionnaire was conducted with a sample size of 10% of respondents, as recommended by Shaheen and Pradhan (2019). The reliability coefficient was calculated to be 0.86. Cronbach's alpha coefficient levels of at least 0.71 were obtained as recommended (Schrepp, 2020), which confirmed that this study's data collection instruments were reliable. Cross-referencing data from various methods also assisted the general reliability and credibility of the study process.

3.7 Data Analysis Methods

The quantitative data gathered through the survey questionnaire were thoroughly analyzed using SPSS Version 21, summarized, and presented via descriptive statistics, with tables assisting the results' presentation. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis, whereby key themes obtained from the data obtained were identified and thoroughly analyzed. The findings were also augmented by various quotations made by the respondents while responding to the interview's questions to enrich the study's findings and discussion.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

The researcher complied with essential research ethics, including respect for respondents involved and upholding the principles of beneficence and fairness. A formal permit was acquired from the Regional Administrative Secretary of Dodoma City before data collection, which facilitated the introduction of the research to the community and officials. Participants were all informed about the study's purposes, methodologies, and results, and informed consent was obtained in order to guarantee voluntary participation. It also permitted respondents to withdraw at any moment without repercussions. The researcher prevented the respondents from any physical, psychological, or social harm. Confidentiality and anonymity were thoroughly preserved during the research

process, with personal identifiers omitted from data analysis and final reporting to protect privacy. The research received ethical approval from the St. John's University of Tanzania Research and Ethics Committee, hence adhering to institutional and national regulations.

4. Results and Discussion

The section presents findings obtained from respondents of the study using questionnaires and findings obtained from secondary sources.

4.1 Effects of Community Policing in

Reducing Urban Crimes in Chang'ombe Ward

The study was designed to assess the impacts of various community policing initiatives implemented in Dodoma City to reduce urban crimes while improving security in the city, focusing on Chang'ombe Ward. The findings revealed that community policing programs have returned several positive outcomes in the Chang'ombe Ward, although some areas still require reinforcement. The statistical summary of these findings is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' views on the effects of community policing in Chang'ombe Ward (n=143)

Respondents' Views on Community Policing Effects	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Increased community participation in neighborhood safety	38.50%	15.30%	12.60%	17.40%	16.10%
Improved early detection of crimes in the area	20.90%	24.50%	16.10%	24.50%	13.90%
Youth Engagement and Reduced Gang Activities	40.50%	27.90%	9.00%	20.20%	2.10%
Strengthening police community partnerships	20.90%	30.70%	0.00%	25.20%	23.10%
Improved trust between police and communities	22.40%	32.80%	14.70%	14.70%	15.40%
Enhanced crime reporting and intelligence gathering	31.50%	27.30%	20.90%	13.90%	6.30%
Reduction of petty and street crimes	31.50%	30.80%	3.50%	18.80%	15.30%
Contribution to sustainable urban community development	32.20%	18.20%	13.90%	20.90%	14.70%
Reduction in the fear of crime in the streets	34.90%	24.50%	12.60%	13.30%	14.70%

4.1.1 Increased community participation in neighborhood safety

According to the findings obtained, slightly above half of the respondents, totaling 53.80% cumulatively, either agreed or strongly agreed that, community policing strategy in Chang'ombe Ward has contributed to increased safety. This finding implies that the residents of the Chang'ombe area currently perceive crime prevention as a collective responsibility rather than a task to be done solely by the law enforcement officers. Through community meetings, neighbourhood watch activities, and crime prevention forums, citizens actively contribute to local safety measures. These findings are supported by Walwa (2018), who observed that an increased community participation in policing initiatives, specifically through the neighbourhood

watch group at Changanikeni area, was an ideal crime prevention initiative and produced the best outcomes on crime reduction. The police officers at the Changanikeni area were very close with the community and acted as a link manager between the police force and the community in dealing with urban crimes.

4.1.2 Improved early detection of crimes

The findings further revealed that about 45.40% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that Community Policing in Chang'ombe Ward has improved the early detection of crimes in the area. This is attributed mainly to closer communication between police officers and Chang'ombe residents. These findings are substantiated by the opinions of one of the community leaders interviewed in the area:

"Frankly speaking, the Community Policing initiative has contributed to knowing the main sources of crimes and therefore detecting them before they happen, and therefore being able to intervene in them on time. In our area, we have been able to achieve this through various means, enhancing anonymous tip-off channels and the use of mobile phones and WhatsApp groups for real-time information sharing with officers. Most importantly, our night patrols involving community members have significantly contributed to this achievement". (Interview with Community Leader at Chang'ombe Area, 2025)

Nevertheless, about 38.40% of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed cumulatively, implying that the effectiveness of early detection is still limited by fear of retaliation, insufficient response times, and sometimes low confidence in follow-up actions after crimes have been reported. This implies that, there further improvements are needed to improve early crime detection in the area, as one of the respondents argued:

"While we acknowledge that it is our duty as residents to report any crimes that we see immediately, some people refrain from doing that, due to two things; firstly, the fear of retaliation, since people who are involved in such crimes live in our area. The second thing is the slow speed of responding once the crime has been reported. Therefore, the local authorities and police officers need to strongly maintain reporters' anonymity and respond swiftly to detaining these criminals once a crime has been reported. If these two areas are improved, it will help greatly in building confidence in many people to report more crimes". (Interview with a resident in Chang'ombe Ward, June 2024).

Similar findings have been reported by a study by Weisburd et al. (2021), conducted in New York City and published in *Policing & Society*. This study indicated that community policing helped to decrease crime rates in neighbourhoods where officers persistently engaged residents through meetings and workshops, and that sustained relationships between police and communities helped to significantly promote trust and boost early crime reporting. Likewise, an investigation done by Ifeanyichukwu et al (2025) noted that community policing programs produced a noticeable impact on crime rates in Umuahia, especially through improved police community teamwork. Several respondents noticed that effective community policing helped to enhance security and facilitated information gathering and reporting in a previously difficult-to-access area. (Ifeanyichukwu, Etim, Njibi, & Waziri, 2025).

Equally, Lundman's (2023) study published in the Police Journal found that communities with low trust in police often exhibit reluctance in engaging with crime reporting systems, further confirming the findings in the current study. Also, Rosenfeld and Fornango's (2022) study suggested that improving reporting mechanisms, such as anonymous hotlines, and fostering positive police-community relations can help enhance crime reporting and reduce crime. These findings suggest that although crime reporting systems in Chang'ombe Ward might not be perceived as effective, interventions that are purposefully designed to address these barriers could improve public participation in crime reporting efforts, eventually leading to a safer community.

4.1.3 Youth engagement and reduced gang activities

According to the data analysed, the majority of the respondents, accounting for 68.40% strongly agreed or agreed cumulatively that community policing has contributed to the reduction of gang-related activities among Chang'ombe youths. Researchers have observed that organizing programs such as sports events and business mentorship programs for the youth has contributed to creating alternative avenues for social integration. This demonstrates that engaging young people in positive community programs helps to reduce the allure of the youth being involved in criminal networks and violent peer groups.

A respondent interviewed at the Chang'ombe Central Market had the following to say:

"In the past years, our area was known as a crime-infested locality and had a very bad reputation due to the predominance of gang activities. Our kids were killing each other daily and were notoriously engaging in stealing, raping, drug abuse, and robbery, to name a few. However, with the coming of the community policing initiative, Chang'ombe has been relatively peaceful, and you can now walk at night with little fear compared to the past days". (Interview with small trader at Chang'ombe Central Market, June 2024)

Several studies support these findings by underlining the influence of community policing initiatives in reducing youth involvement in criminal activities. For instance, a study by Coakley (2016), which explored the influence of youth sports programs on crime prevention, argued that structured and well-managed sports initiatives aligned with community policing strategies can substantially minimize youth participation in criminal activities by providing constructive social environments and positive role

models.

Similarly, Donnelly and Coakley's (2018) study, which reinforced the view that integrating youth engagement programs such as sports events within a community policing framework helps to improve neighbourhood safety by promoting mutual trust, cooperation, and social cohesion between the police and the youths, hence preventing them from engaging in criminal activities. Additionally, a study by Lamb (2019), which investigated the relationship between social cohesion and violence in South Africa, revealed that police-supported sports programs can help build stronger community ties, reduce hostility, and discourage youth from partaking in gang-related or violent behaviours.

In a more recent study, undertaken by Ndung'u and Moi (2024), which analysed crime prevention strategies in Kenya, strongly emphasizing the necessity of community inclusion and participatory policing methods in reducing crimes. Their research argued that sports-centered initiatives provide effective platforms for winning the at-risk youth, ultimately diverting them from engaging in criminal behaviours, and strengthening community–police collaboration.

4.1.4 Strengthening Police–Community Partnerships

The findings further indicate that a total of 51.60% of the respondents involved generally acknowledged that community policing efforts have strengthened the partnerships between the police and the community, eventually leading to improved dialogue and joint problem-solving, which helped to minimize crimes in the area. Nevertheless, about 48.40% of the respondents remained neutral or cumulatively disagreed with this argument, implying that more efforts are needed to strengthen these partnerships by focusing on consistent engagement and trust-building measures for this aspect to be fully functional and effective.

Various studies have indicated that police reforms through supporting community policing help to improve trust and cooperation between police and community members, which are crucial for effective crime prevention in urban areas, specifically those characterized by high population density and social challenges (Makoye & Kibona, 2021; Mshana, 2022), like in the Chang'ombe area. In addition, scholars like Wantenaar and Govender (2023) have argued that, when well-implemented, community policing helps to improve not only safety but also social unity through improving community-police relationships, economic activity, and strengthening public confidence in state institutions.

Additionally, a study by Alehegn, Karunakaran, and Engida (2025) in Ethiopia stressed that law enforcement agencies must prioritize strengthening trust with members of communities they serve through transparent communication, enforcing accountability, and persistent engagement to continue bridging the trust gap and augmenting their legitimacy to communities. (Alehegn, Karunakaran, & Engida, 2025)

4.1.5 Improved Trust between Police and Communities

The findings obtained indicated that approximately 55.20% of respondents cumulatively agreed and affirmed that community policing initiatives helped to improve trust between police and the Chang'ombe community residents. This improvement is attributed to improved communication and transparency in law enforcement operations.

Nevertheless, small mistrust continues with 29.90% of the respondents cumulatively, indicating their disagreement, probably due to perceived corruption, delayed response, and occasional abuse of authority. Therefore, continuous efforts in enforcing accountability and professionalism are needed to maintain and deepen the existing trust. The improved trust between communities and police agencies is echoed by one of the key informants (Ward Executive Officer), who was interviewed and stated the following:

"One of the benefits of community policing in the area is that it has brought together the law enforcement officers and members of the community who together collaborate in planning policing activities such as night patrols. This has improved trust between community members and police officers". (Interview with Ward Executive Officer, June 2025).

Several studies have demonstrated that community policing programs serve as an essential mechanism for reinstating and solidifying trust between law enforcement agencies and local communities, chiefly in contexts where previous policing operations were perceived as bullying or oppressive. Besides, according to Gill et al. (2014), continuous community-policing engagement that goes beyond mere crime response activities is important for promoting mutual trust, with maintaining transparency identified as a key component of this process. Additionally, Braga, Weisburd, and Turchan (2018) indicated that programs such as convening regular community meetings, organizing public forums, and the inclusion of citizen feedback mechanisms help to improve transparency and strengthen trust, especially

within high-crime neighbourhoods. These proactive measures enable communities to gain a clearer understanding of policing strategies and decision-making processes, eventually promoting cooperation and accountability.

4.1.6 Enhanced Crime Reporting and Intelligence Gathering

Nearly 59.00% of respondents in the Chang'ombe area have acknowledged the improvement in crime reporting and intelligence sharing. Respondents reported that the emergence of community policing in their Ward has sensitized citizens' willingness to provide information that aids in crime investigations. This development emphasizes the role of community policing in breaking the community's historical silence around crime reporting that existed due to fear or lack of confidence in the law enforcement agencies.

These results concur with a study undertaken by Ifeanyichukwu et al (2025) in Nigeria, which noted that community policing, especially through improved police relations, helped to improve security by facilitating information gathering and reporting in a previously difficult-to-access area. (Ifeanyichukwu, Etim, Njibi, & Waziri, 2025). These findings imply that, provision of community education and inclusive dialogues concerning safety and security matters must continue to sustain trust and improve information sharing.

4.1.7 Reduction of petty and street crimes

A significant 62.30% of respondents agreed that community policing has helped reduce petty thefts, burglary, and street crimes. The presence of patrols, vigilance groups, and information exchange networks acts as a deterrence. Nevertheless, these improvements may vary across sub-wards, influenced by socio-economic conditions and the presence of active community structures. These findings are supported by Kilian and Pastory (2018), who observed that community policing significantly improves public safety and reduces criminal activities, including petty crimes, especially in areas that are lacking formal police presence. This is also supported by Walwa (2018), who contended that community policing provides an avenue to resolve the youth unemployment challenge by involving young people in conducting patrols and participating in security groups that complement their informal economic activities, hence reducing their engagement in petty crimes.

4.1.8 Contribution to Sustainable Urban Community Development

About 50.40% of respondents surveyed at Chang'ombe

Ward either strongly agree or agree, cumulatively, that community policing contributes to urban stability and development by fostering peace and social order. Experience around the world has indicated that crime reduction indirectly promotes economic activities, attracting local and foreign investment in the area, and ultimately promoting overall community well-being.

These findings are supported by the Interpol report, which recognizes policing (including community policing) as having both direct and indirect relationships with the UN SDGs, particularly those related to maintenance of peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16). Global experiences have indicated that safer environments provide wider avenues for economic activities, attracting investment, schooling, and other development processes to continue with less disruption. Likewise, community policing is designed to reduce crime and fear of crime through increasing law enforcement visibility, responsiveness, and community partnership, which in turn promotes sustainable urban community development.

Moreover, the World Bank (2023), in its report titled "Urban Crime and Socioeconomic Development: Policy Lessons from Global Cities", which based on reviewed policies from over 30 cities revealed that, combining crime prevention strategies with social development programs such as job creation, provision of mental health support, and early childhood education contributed to a 27% overall decrease in crime rate. The report emphasized the importance of cross-sector collaboration in developing inclusive crime prevention strategies.

4.1.9 Reduction in fear of crime

A combined 59.40% of respondents reported feeling safer, showing that community policing not only addresses crime occurrence but also improves perceptions of safety, which is a key component of urban life and socio-economic development. The results are complemented by a statement produced by one of the residents in Chang'ombe ward, who stated the following:

"Before the introduction of community policing in our Ward, no one dared to move around, especially at night, without being accompanied by another person. This place was like a criminal's fortress, and we actually lived in great fear for ourselves and our children. Thus, I personally appreciate the presence of the sungusungu program, which has greatly reduced fears among communities". (Interview with a resident in Chang'ombe Ward, June 2024).

These findings are supported by Lord et al. (2009) and Maguire et al. (2017), who hypothesized that community policing approaches can efficiently reduce crime rates and fear of crime in the communities through increased police

visibility, continuous foot patrols, and enhanced trust between police officers and residents in the neighbourhoods. Likewise, a study by Roh and Oliver (2005) argued that community policing is a very effective strategy for curbing crimes and alleviating fear, especially in smaller and mid-sized urban environments. Additionally, Ferguson and Mindel (2007) emphasized that the implementation of community policing initiatives, such as Neighbourhood Watch programs, contributes to the reduction of crime and fear by promoting active citizen participation in safety initiatives. Correspondingly, Crawford et al. (2003) discovered that community policing strategies that directly focus on addressing local security concerns contribute to a substantial decrease in both crime incidence and public Anxiety about Crimes.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that community policing plays an essential role in promoting peace, safety, and sustainable development within urban areas, including in Chang'ombe Ward. The findings confirm that community policing improves collaboration between law enforcement agencies and citizens, facilitates early crime detection, and reduces fear of crime among residents. Furthermore, it promotes community empowerment by encouraging collective responsibility for security and cultivating trust between police officers and community members. The positive outcomes associated with community policing include: improved crime reporting, heightened youth participation in preventive programs, and reinforced neighborhood watch activities, which indicate its potential as an effective strategy for modern urban security management.

Nevertheless, the study also reveals persistent challenges, such as limited resources, which contribute to inadequate police visibility in certain areas. It also identified weak accountability structures and the declining relevance of volunteer policing models in the urban setting. These limitations, if left unaddressed, may undermine public trust and compromise the sustainability of community policing initiatives. Overall, the findings suggest that community policing should not be perceived solely as a law enforcement tool but as a wider framework for community empowerment, participatory governance, and sustainable urban development. Its success relies on strong institutional support, provision of adequate resources, and constant engagement between citizens, law enforcement agencies, and local authorities.

5.2 Recommendations

The study provides the following recommendations for improving community policing in the Chang'ombe area

and allowing it to reach its full potential.

Policy Recommendations

1.Institutionalization of Community Policing:The government, through the Tanzania Police Force and Local Government Authorities (LGAs), should strengthen the institutional framework that oversees community policing. This can be attained by establishing formal policy directives, operational standards, and clear legal mandates that define clearly the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

2.Integration into Urban Safety and Development Policies: Community policing must be integrated into broader urban safety and development strategies for it to be effective, as well as aligning the strategy with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities; and SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). This alignment will guarantee that community policing is officially recognized as a tool for achieving inclusive, safe, and resilient cities, free of crime.

3.Reform of Volunteer Policing Models: Existing volunteer policing groups, such as *sungusungu* must be reviewed and modernized to make them appropriate with current urban contexts. Reforms must emphasize professionalism, training, fostering accountability, and legal oversight in order to prevent human rights abuses and guarantee their effectiveness.

4.Establishment of Feedback and Accountability Systems: There is a need to establish formal community feedback platforms such as complaint desks, hotlines, and periodic public forums. These platforms would help in improving transparency and enable citizens to report misconduct, eventually strengthening mutual accountability between the police and the community.

5.3Recommendations for Actions

1. **Enhancing Police Visibility and Accessibility:** The Police Force ought to increase its presence in high-risk neighborhoods via regular foot and motorized patrols. This will augment deterrence, promote public confidence, and facilitate a quick response to criminal incidents.

2. **Expanding Youth Engagement Programs:** Targeted programs that integrate sports, vocational training, and entrepreneurship development should be integrated within community policing programs. Engaging youth in productive activities, as experiences have shown, helps to reduce crime and provides alternative livelihoods.

3. **Strengthening Community Awareness and Education:** Sustained community education campaigns are quite essential for sensitizing residents about the aim and benefits of community policing. Such initiatives must focus on fostering rights awareness, civic duty, and the importance of collective security.

4. **Capacity Building and Resource Mobilization:** Adequate training and logistical support must be provided to police officers and community members engaging in community policing programs. Training should include: imparting conflict resolution skills, data-driven policing, communication skills, and awareness and adherence to human rights.

5. **Promoting Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships:** Collaboration among the police, civil society organizations, religious institutions, educational institutions, and local leaders is quite crucial for creating a coordinated response to crimes. These partnerships should be built based on trust, shared objectives, and mutual accountability.

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