JRIIE Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education
Center for Research Implications & Practice

Website: www.jriiejournal.com ISSN 2520-7504 (Online) Vol.10, Iss.4, 2026 (pp. 1006 - 1015)

Exploring Strategies for Enhancing Youth Participation in Community Policing in Dodoma, Tanzania

Walii Matengo and Elizabeth Msoka
St John's University of Tanzania
Email: wankyrshna@gmail.com

Abstract: *Despite ongoing law enforcement efforts, urban and peri-urban areas in Tanzania continue to face evolving crime challenges that require broader community involvement. In this regard, this paper discusses the assessment of strategies used for youth engagement in community policing for crime prevention in Dodoma District, Tanzania. The study guided by Community Policing Theory and Social Control Theory. The research adopted a qualitative multiple case study design, gathering data from 52 participants including police officers, ward officials, community leaders, youth, and volunteers through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary reviews, followed by thematic analysis. The findings revealed that youth are recruited through local government registers, community meetings, and youth groups, and are engaged via neighborhood patrols, security meetings, committees, and awareness campaigns. This structured involvement has boosted transparency, accountability, and community ownership, while significantly contributing to local safety through enhanced real-time information sharing, early threat detection, increased surveillance, and stronger police-community cooperation. However, youth participation faces critical challenges, including high unemployment, a lack of financial incentives or resources, limited security awareness, mutual mistrust, and a pervasive fear of retaliation from criminals. The study concludes that while youth are indispensable to effective crime prevention, their long-term participation requires supportive institutional frameworks, capacity building, and improved trust with security actors. It recommends strengthening youth empowerment programs, expanding training and awareness initiatives, establishing robust whistle blower protection mechanisms, and implementing inclusive policies that treat youth as true partners in maintaining public safety.*

Keywords**:** *Youth engagement, Community policing, Crime prevention, Community involvement, Law enforcement.*

How to cite this work (APA):

Matengo, W. & Msoka, E. (2026). Exploring Strategies for Enhancing Youth Participation in Community Policing in Dodoma, Tanzania. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education, 10*(4), 1006 – 1015. **https://doi.org/doi.org/10.59765/0htrq8**

1. Introduction

Youth are among the most important stakeholders in community policing because they constitute a large proportion of the population and possess the energy, creativity, and social influence needed to support crime prevention. Their engagement includes participation in neighborhood surveillance, crime reporting, awareness campaigns, volunteer security groups, conflict resolution, and digital crime reporting, all of which enhance information sharing, early crime detection, social cohesion, and trust between communities and law enforcement agencies (Adam & Kawugana, 2025; Iwelumor et al., 2025).

However, effective youth participation depends on deliberate engagement strategies such as civic education, youth volunteer programmes, police community dialogue forums, school-based crime prevention initiatives, neighborhood watch groups, leadership development, and

partnerships between police, local governments, and civil society organizations (UNODC, 2023).

The implementation of these strategies differs across regions. In Europe, countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands have strengthened youth participation through police cadet programmes, neighborhood watch schemes, school safety clubs, and youth advisory councils, contributing to reduced antisocial behaviour and improved trust in law enforcement (Adam & Kawugana, 2025; Ariel et al., 2017). In Asia, countries including India, Singapore, and Indonesia have integrated digital technologies such as mobile applications, social media platforms, and online crime reporting systems into community policing, increasing youth participation in addressing cybercrime, drug-related offences, theft, and community violence despite challenges associated with socio-economic inequalities and unequal access to technology (Iwelumor et al., 2025; UNODC, 2023).

Across Africa, community policing has become an important strategy for addressing crime linked to unemployment, poverty, inequality, urbanization, and weak institutional capacity. Countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, and Nigeria engage youth through neighbourhood security committees, volunteer community safety groups, peace ambassador programmes, and local crime prevention campaigns, which have strengthened crime reporting and collaboration between communities and law enforcement agencies while reducing youth involvement in criminal activities (Kamugisha, 2020; Marfo et al., 2021).

1.2 Statement of the problem

In Tanzania, community policing remains a key approach for improving public safety through collaboration between the Tanzania Police Force, local government authorities, community leaders, and citizens. Youth participate in neighbourhood watch groups, public awareness campaigns, voluntary security committees, and community-based crime reporting initiatives that support surveillance, information sharing, and peaceful coexistence (United Republic of Tanzania, 2024). Nevertheless, their participation is constrained by unemployment, inadequate resources, weak institutional coordination, insufficient training, and limited trust in law enforcement agencies, while existing community policing structures often provide few opportunities for meaningful youth leadership and decision-making (Mnyawami, 2022; Mwakalobo, 2021).

Dodoma City provides an appropriate context for examining youth engagement strategies because rapid urbanization, population growth, and expanding economic activities have contributed to increasing security challenges, including theft, drug abuse, gender-based violence, and juvenile delinquency. Although community policing structures have been established, limited empirical evidence exists on the strategies used to engage youth and their effectiveness in strengthening community safety. This study therefore seeks to assess the strategies used to engage youth in community policing initiatives in Dodoma City to generate evidence that can inform policy, strengthen community policing programmes, improve police community collaboration, and contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16 through more inclusive and sustainable crime prevention.

1.3 Theoretical Review

This study is anchored in Social Control Theory (Hirschi, 1969) and Community Policing Theory (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990). Social Control Theory argues that individuals are less likely to engage in criminal behaviour when they develop strong social bonds through attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. These bonds encourage conformity to societal norms and discourage deviant behaviour. Within community policing, youth engagement strategies such as civic education, neighborhood watch programmes, volunteer policing, leadership development, and awareness campaigns strengthen young people's attachment to their communities while increasing their commitment to maintaining public safety (Adam & Kawugana, 2025; Iwelumor et al., 2025). Recent criminological evidence further shows that informal social control and collective community action remain important mechanisms for reducing youth offending and strengthening community safety (Linning et al., 2024).

Community Policing Theory emphasizes that effective policing depends on partnerships between law enforcement agencies and community members rather than relying solely on police enforcement (Skogan, 2006; Weerawardhana & Wijewardhana, 2024). The theory advocates collaborative problem-solving, trust building, and shared responsibility in maintaining public safety. Youth engagement strategies including police community forums, school safety programmes, digital reporting platforms, neighborhood patrols, and community awareness campaigns enhance communication, improve police legitimacy, and strengthen information sharing for crime prevention (Gill et al., 2014; Li et al., 2024). Contemporary reviews indicate that community policing is most effective where meaningful citizen participation and institutional trust are sustained (Blair et al., 2024; Tyler, 2004).

Previous studies show that community policing strategies improve crime prevention, but most have not specifically

examined strategies for engaging youth (Kamugisha, 2020; Marfo et al., 2021). Most evidence comes from Europe, North America, and a few African countries, with limited research from Tanzania, especially Dodoma City (Mnyawami, 2022; Mwakalobo, 2021). There is also little evidence on how youth engagement influences police legitimacy, community trust, and long-term participation. Therefore, this study aims to assess the strategies used to engage youth in community policing initiatives in Dodoma City. The findings will provide context-specific evidence to support policy and improve community policing practices.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Empirical Review

2.1.1 Strategies Used to Engage Youth in Community Policing Initiatives

Previous empirical studies have examined different strategies used to engage youth in community policing initiatives and their contribution to crime prevention and community safety (Modise, 2023; Sospeter & Kaburire, 2025). In the East African context, Sospeter and Kaburire (2025) assessed community policing strategies used to reduce urban crimes in Chang'ombe Ward, Dodoma City, Tanzania. Using a cross-sectional mixed-methods design with 143 respondents, they found that police visibility, public awareness campaigns, and multi-stakeholder collaboration were the most effective strategies, although volunteer policing faced operational hurdles. They concluded that enhancing police-community cooperation and youth participation is crucial for local safety. Similarly, Mwangi et al. (2025) employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design with 98 respondents in Kamukunji, Kenya, revealing that community involvement, foot patrols, partnerships, and youth engagement initiatives significantly reduced youth radicalization, proving that multi-actor collaboration strengthens community resilience. Adding to the East African context, Kibona and Mallya (2024) utilized a descriptive cross-sectional design involving 120 respondents in Arusha, Tanzania, and established that establishing youth-led neighborhood watch groups, athletic clubs, and local peace forums effectively reduced juvenile vagrancy and petty crimes by 35%, although sustainability was hindered by lack of formal stipends.

Expanding to global and regional perspectives, Khan et al. (2026) utilized crime data analysis, interviews, and spatial mapping to demonstrate that proactive community policing, targeted interventions, and youth involvement enhance information sharing, build public trust, and enable early threat detection in urban areas. Likewise, Opare and Mensah (2024) conducted a quantitative survey among 210 young adults in Accra, Ghana, demonstrating that structured civic education programs and digital crime-reporting mobile applications significantly amplified youth willingness to collaborate with local security committees. In high-density settings, Nwaogwugwu et al. (2025) applied quantitative regression and correlation analyses, concluding that community policing significantly reduces crime by fostering trust, while emphasizing youth-focused empowerment programs as vital components of sustainable policing. Furthermore, Modise's (2023) review highlighted that neighborhood watches, community patrols, and public participation enhance crime prevention, though implementation is often constrained by resource deficits, limited engagement, and weak institutional support.

Overall, empirical evidence indicates that youth engagement in community policing relies on strategies such as civic education, awareness campaigns, volunteer programs, police-community forums, neighborhood watches, and collaborative partnerships. However, most existing studies focus broadly on general community participation rather than the specific mechanisms required to engage youth effectively. Additionally, there remains a shortage of localized empirical research on youth engagement strategies within Tanzania, particularly in Dodoma City. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by assessing the specific strategies used to engage youth in community policing initiatives in Dodoma City.

2.2 Research Gap

Despite growing scholarship on community policing, a critical empirical gap remains regarding the specific structural mechanisms used to engage youth in local security frameworks within developing urban contexts like Dodoma City, Tanzania, as existing studies largely focus on general community participation or Western settings. To address this gap, this study conceptualizes Youth Engagement Strategies encompassing civic education, awareness campaigns, volunteer programs, police-community forums, neighborhood watches, and digital reporting platforms as the independent variable that fosters active participation, improves information sharing, and enhances security awareness (Gill et al., 2014; Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990). This relationship is mediated by key intervening variables, including institutional support, community trust, and youth willingness to participate, which together ensure resource allocation, sustain long-term engagement, and reinforce police legitimacy (Tyler, 2004). Consequently, the dependent variable, Effective Community Policing, is operationalized through increased youth participation, timely information sharing, early threat detection, and overall crime reduction. Grounded in Social Control and

Community Policing theories, this integrated framework posits that robust youth engagement supported by strong institutional backing and mutual trust drives sustainable community safety outcomes in urban Tanzania (Skogan, 2006).

3. Methodology

This study was conducted in Dodoma City, Tanzania specifically across Chang'ombe, Nkuhungu, and Kizota wards a setting selected due to rapid urban growth associated with its capital status and mounting crime concerns (Kimbosho, 2023; Maidawa, 2023). To explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and social dynamics regarding community policing and crime prevention, a qualitative research approach employing a multiple case study design was adopted, drawing insights from a broader target population of 385 stakeholders (Kumar et al., 2019; Mburu, 2021; Nubani et al., 2023; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The sample comprised 52 participants, including 6 ward officials, 3 police officers, 3 community leaders, 22 youth, and 18 community policing volunteers, where key informants were selected via purposive sampling and youth and volunteers were chosen through simple random sampling to capture diverse perspectives and minimize bias (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Primary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with officials and focus group discussions (FGDs) with youth and volunteers to examine direct engagement, complemented by secondary data extracted from police crime reports, security meeting logs, and ward documentation (Izzaty et al., 2018; Panchenko & Samovilova, 2020). The qualitative data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework encompassing data familiarization, initial coding, theme generation, refinement, and final reporting supported by NVivo software to systematically structure themes around youth participation, institutional support, trust, and safety outcomes (Luckman et al., 2016). Finally, research trustworthiness was upheld across the dimensions of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability by subjecting research instruments to expert peer review, maintaining rigorous documentation of the analytical audit trail, and utilizing consistent data collection procedures (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013; Luckman et al., 2016).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants

The socio-demographic profile of the 52 respondents across Chang'ombe, Nkuhungu, and Kizota wards in Dodoma City provided a comprehensive baseline for evaluating youth engagement in community policing. Gender distribution showed that 56.1% ($n=29$) were male and 43.8% ($n=23$) were female. This slight male dominance reflects gendered participation patterns common in informal security roles across urban Tanzania, where night patrols and physical surveillance are socially perceived as male-dominated tasks, while female participants contributed heavily through information sharing and committee leadership (Nubani et al., 2023).

Regarding age distribution, 47.9% ($n=25$) of participants were aged 18–30 years, 29.2% ($n=15$) were aged 31–40 years, and 22.9% ($n=12$) were above 40 years. The pronounced representation of young adults aligned directly with the study's core focus on youth engagement, reflecting their physical presence as both primary demographic targets of local security interventions and active agents in grassroots crime prevention (Kumar et al., 2019).

Educational attainments varied across the sample: 39.6% ($n=21$) held certificate or diploma qualifications, 31.3% ($n=16$) completed primary or secondary education, and 29.7% ($n=15$) possessed university degrees. This educational diversity enriched qualitative inquiries, combining practical grassroots security experiences from primary/secondary graduates with strategic analytical perspectives on policy and governance from tertiary educated participants (Izzaty et al., 2018).

Categorized by institutional roles, the sample comprised youth non-state actors (39.6%, $n=21$), community policing volunteers (*ulinzi shirikishi*) (35.4%, $n=18$), ward administration officials (12.5%, $n=6$), community police officers (6.3%, $n=3$), and traditional/street leaders (*wewiti/mewiti*) (6.3%, $n=3$). Triangulating these diverse institutional perspectives enhanced qualitative credibility by comparing the operational realities of frontline youth volunteers with administrative assessments from police and local government authorities (Ahmed et al., 2025).

4.2 Strategies Used to Engage Youth in Community Policing Initiatives in Dodoma City

The qualitative findings established that engaging youth in community policing across Chang'ombe, Nkuhungu, and Kizota wards relies on a combination of participatory platforms, structured committees, local recruitment frameworks, and capacity-building initiatives.

4.2.1 Community Security Meetings, Awareness Campaigns, and Committee Structures

Public awareness campaigns, ward-level security assemblies (*mikutano ya ya haki na usalama*), and neighborhood patrols serve as primary platforms for mobilizing young people. These meetings provide regular channels for dialogue between ward authorities, police officers, and young residents, demystified law enforcement operations, and fostered shared responsibility for public safety. Illustrating how public sensitization alters youth perceptions, a municipal administrative participant stated:

"In our ward, we engage youth through community security meetings, awareness campaigns, and neighborhood patrol activities. We also collaborate with local leaders to encourage young people to participate in maintaining peace and security." (Interview, Ward Official 1, Chang'ombe Ward, 22/05/2026)

Complementing broad awareness campaigns, structured Ward Community Policing Committees (*Kamati za Ulinzi Shirikishi*) offer targeted frameworks for capacity building. Through these committees, selected youths receive foundational training in crime detection, basic evidence preservation, and safe reporting procedures. A local community leader highlighted the impact of these structured training sessions on youth-police collaboration:

"Youth are involved through community policing committees, where they receive training on crime prevention and reporting suspicious activities. This has helped strengthencooperation between youth and security organs." (Interview, Community Leader 1, Nkuhungu Ward, 23/05/2026)

These findings strongly align with the core philosophy of community policing, which emphasizes decentralized problem-solving, structural communication channels, and police-citizen partnerships (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994). Regular interactive forums reduce mistrust and convert young citizens from passive subjects of policing into proactive security partners. Furthermore, continuous capacity building echoes Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1990) as well as Trojanowicz and Ubiquitous (1998), who argued that empowering citizens through formal knowledge development is essential for effective, non-coercive community safety. The findings also reinforce Putnam's (2000) social capital framework, demonstrating that collaborative security networks generate bridging social capital, improve real-time information flows, and elevate community resilience against crime in rapidly expanding urban centers like Dodoma City.

4.2.2 Identification and Recruitment Frameworks for Youth Participation

The study revealed that identifying and recruiting youth into community policing programs in Dodoma City relies heavily on embedded, multi-tiered community selection processes rather than ad-hoc recruitment. Local government registers, registered youth groups, and street-level assemblies (*mikutano ya mtaa*) serve as the primary screening mechanisms. Detailing these formal administrative entry points, a ward administrator explained:

"Most youth are identified through local government registers, youth groups, and community meetings. Those who show interest and good conduct are encouraged to join community policing programs." (Interview, Ward Official 1, Kizota Ward, 24/05/2026)

Beyond administrative screening, public nomination during village and street assemblies ensures that character vetting remains a collective community process. Elders and residents actively nominate young individuals known for discipline, integrity, and personal responsibility. Highlighting this participatory nomination process, a street leader noted:

"Recruitment is usually conducted through village and street meetings where community members nominate responsible and committed youth. Some volunteers also join after being sensitized about the importance of community security." (Interview, Community Leader 2, Chang'ombe Ward, 25/05/2026)

Utilizing indigenous social structures for recruitment guarantees transparency, accountability, and local legitimacy. When young volunteers are vetted and endorsed by their own neighbors and elders, mutual trust is established, mitigating fears of infiltration by criminal elements. This aligns with Sospeter et al. (2025), who found that structured local platforms in Dodoma City are crucial for mobilizing community security volunteers. Similarly, Odhiambo et al. (2025) observed in Kenya that participatory, community-backed selection mechanisms enhance public trust in security personnel and improve operational effectiveness. Furthermore, the voluntary enrolment observed after civic sensitization campaigns reinforces Mwangi et al. (2025), proving that targeted civic education significantly increases youth willingness to participate in crime prevention. Ultimately, as emphasized by Nzabahimana et al. (2022), transparent selection processes strengthen community security architecture by ensuring that highly motivated, credible individuals are entrusted with neighborhood protection.

4.3 Challenges and Level of Youth Participation in Community Policing Initiatives

4.3.1 Socio-Economic Constraints and Operational Challenges

Despite the operational frameworks established across Dodoma City, structural and socio-economic hurdles significantly constrain the implementation of youth engagement strategies. Qualitative evidence identified economic hardship, severe unemployment, lack of material incentives, and fear of criminal retaliation as primary barriers disrupting sustained youth involvement.

Financial constraints pose an existential challenge to voluntary security arrangements. In fast-growing urban wards like Chang'ombe and Kizota, many young volunteers face extreme economic precarity. Spending long hours on unpaid night patrols directly conflicts with their daily survival imperatives. Addressing this economic dilemma, a ward official remarked:

"One major challenge is the limited financial resources available to support youth activities. Many young people expect incentives, which are often unavailable, making it difficult to sustain their participation." (Interview, Ward Official 2, Kizota Ward, 23/05/2026)

Compounding financial deficits, high youth unemployment fosters apathy and ideological detachment. Unemployed youths frequently view security maintenance as an exclusive statutory duty of the central government rather than a collective civic obligation. Elucidating these socio-economic dynamics, a community leader observed:

"Unemployment and lack of awareness among some youth affect their willingness to participate. Some perceive community policing as a government responsibility rather than a community obligation." (Interview, Community Leader 3, Nkuhungu Ward, 24/05/2026)

These findings demonstrate that civic consciousness alone cannot overcome severe material deprivation. Without basic stipends, protective gear, transport allowances, or formal economic empowerment schemes, voluntary youth involvement degrades into irregular, high-turnover participation. This outcome mirrors Nega (2025), who documented that resource deficits severely impair community security initiatives in developing urban contexts. Likewise, Bosilong et al. (2025) demonstrated that youth disengagement from community safety programs is heavily driven by poverty and unemployment, as economic survival consistently takes precedence over unpaid civic duty. Furthermore, limited civic awareness reinforces the findings of Mwangi et al. (2025), highlighting that inadequate sensitization perpetuates the misconception that public safety is exclusively a state police function.

4.3.2 Appraisal of the Level of Youth Participation

Due to these competing socio-economic pressures, overall youth participation across the sampled wards in Dodoma City remains moderate and highly variable. While a dedicated core of young people actively participates in neighborhood patrols and committee meetings, a substantial proportion remains disengaged or participates erratically. Characterizing this uneven landscape, a ward administrative officer observed:

"The level of youth participation is moderate. While some young people are highly committed, others are less active due to personal responsibilities and economic challenges." (Interview, Ward Official 3, Chang'ombe Ward, 25/05/2026)

This moderate engagement level underscores that youth involvement in local security frameworks is non-uniform and highly sensitive to external conditions. Highly active youths significantly boost localized intelligence gathering and crime prevention, validating Odhiambo et al. (2025), who noted that committed youth cohorts drastically improve neighborhood safety outcomes. Conversely, the disengagement of marginalized youths due to personal responsibilities and economic strain reflects the systemic barriers identified by Bosilong et al. (2025) and Sospeter et al. (2025). As Mwangi et al. (2025) concluded, transforming moderate, fragmented participation into consistent, widespread youth engagement requires integrating structural economic incentives, ongoing capacity building, and institutional support.

4.3.3 Dynamics Influencing Youth Participation and Perceived Benefits

The operational dynamics dictating youth involvement in Dodoma City represent a complex interplay between positive motivators and severe deterrents. Key factors encouraging participation include formal social recognition, trust in local leadership, heightened security awareness, and opportunities for skill development. Conversely, lack of financial compensation, unemployment, and fear of criminal reprisal serve as major deterrents. Summarizing this duality, a local authority representative stated:

"Factors such as community recognition, trust in local leadership, security awareness, and

opportunities for personal development encourage participation. On the other hand, lack of motivation, unemployment, and fear of retaliation from criminals discourage some youth from getting involved." (Interview, Ward Official 4, Nkuhungu Ward, 26/05/2026)

Where local leadership fosters transparency, community trust, and public appreciation, youth participation increases markedly, confirming Nega (2025) and Nzabahimana et al. (2022). However, where whistleblower protection is weak and criminals quickly return to neighborhoods post-arrest, fear of retaliation severely suppresses youth reporting, reinforcing the findings of Bosilong et al. (2025).

Despite these implementation hurdles, community residents and local leaders strongly value youth involvement in security initiatives. Young volunteers are widely recognized for lowering petty theft, suppressing juvenile vagrancy, and enhancing neighborhood safety across Chang'ombe, Nkuhungu, and Kizota wards. Assessing this broad public endorsement, an administrator stated:

"Most community members appreciate youth involvement because it contributes to crime reduction and strengthens cooperation among residents. Leaders generally support youth participation and encourage them to take active roles in protecting their communities." (Interview, Ward Official 5, Kizota Ward, 22/05/2026)

This positive public perception fosters a supportive environment that reinforces civic duty and mutual trust, supporting Odhiambo et al. (2025), Sospeter et al. (2025), and Mwangi et al. (2025). Institutional backing and community appreciation validate youth contributions, building a foundation for sustainable, community-led crime prevention in Dodoma City.

4.4 Theoretical Synthesis: Linkage with Social Control Theory

The empirical findings from Chang'ombe, Nkuhungu, and Kizota wards map directly onto the foundational tenets of **Social Control Theory** (Hirschi, 1969). Hirschi posits that an individual's engagement in prosocial behaviors is governed by four interrelated social bonds: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

Attachment: The utilization of local government registers, street-level nominations, and youth-police training committees strengthens interpersonal ties between young people, traditional elders, and police officers. Elevated trust and social approval anchor youth securely within established community structures, deterring delinquent behavior.

Commitment: Structured recruitment and formal recognition provide young volunteers with a stake in conformity. Young participants invest their personal reputation in maintaining local safety, recognizing that antisocial conduct would destroy their social standing and trust within their neighborhoods.

Involvement: Direct participation in scheduled night patrols, ward security assemblies, and committee meetings occupies young people's time and energy. Active engagement in structured civic duties reduces idle time, directly diminishing opportunities for criminal temptation or gang recruitment.

Belief: Public sensitization campaigns and civic education reinforce a shared belief in collective security obligations, instilling the conviction that public safety is a joint civic duty rather than solely a police responsibility.

Conversely, the study's findings illustrate those structural breakdowns specifically severe youth unemployment, lack of financial stipends, mistrust, and fear of criminal reprisal severely attenuate these social bonds. As Hirschi (1969) argued, when socio-economic strain breaks attachment and commitment, individuals disengage from collective civic responsibilities. Therefore, ensuring the long-term sustainability of youth engagement in community policing across Dodoma City requires reinforcing these theoretical bonds through institutional support, financial stipends, whistleblower protection, and socio-economic empowerment.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that youth engagement in community policing initiatives in Dodoma City is primarily achieved through participatory strategies, including community security meetings, awareness campaigns, neighborhood patrols, community policing committees, youth groups, and collaboration between local leaders, security institutions, and community members. These approaches create opportunities for youth to access security information, develop crime prevention skills, and participate in maintaining community safety.

The findings further indicate that youth are identified and recruited through community-based mechanisms such as local registers, youth groups, and community meetings, which promote transparency, accountability, and community ownership. However, the effectiveness and sustainability of these strategies remain constrained by socio-economic and institutional challenges, including unemployment, lack of incentives, limited resources,

mistrust, fear of retaliation, and inadequate awareness. Therefore, while youth engagement strategies provide an important foundation for community policing, their long-term effectiveness depends on strengthening supportive structures, improving trust, and addressing barriers that limit consistent participation.

5.2 Knowledge Implications

This study contributes to existing knowledge by demonstrating that effective youth engagement in community policing requires a combination of participatory mechanisms, capacity building, and supportive social conditions. The findings extend existing understanding by showing that youth participation is not determined solely by awareness or willingness but is also influenced by economic realities, perceived safety, and institutional support. The study therefore highlights the importance of considering socio-economic factors when designing youth-centred community policing interventions.

5.3 Policy Implications

The findings suggest that policymakers should integrate youth engagement strategies into community policing policies by developing structured programmes that promote meaningful youth participation. Local and national security frameworks should prioritize youth empowerment, continuous training, awareness creation, and protection mechanisms for youth volunteers. Addressing unemployment and providing appropriate support systems can enhance motivation and improve the sustainability of youth involvement in crime prevention initiatives.

5.4 Practical Implications

Community policing stakeholders, including ward authorities, police officers, and community leaders, should strengthen existing engagement strategies through regular youth forums, targeted awareness campaigns, and practical training programmes. Recognition of active youth participants through certificates, leadership opportunities, and community appreciation can also improve motivation and commitment. Furthermore, strengthening communication channels between youth and security institutions can enhance trust, information sharing, and early detection of security threats.

5.5 Theoretical Implications

The study supports Social Control Theory by demonstrating that youth participation in community policing is strengthened through social relationships, trust, community attachment, and involvement in collective activities. The findings show that strategies such as community meetings, training, and collaborative security initiatives create stronger social bonds that encourage positive participation. However, the study further extends the theory by highlighting that weak socio-economic conditions, limited incentives, and insecurity concerns can weaken these social bonds and reduce sustained engagement.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings and conclusions of this study, targeted institutional and operational interventions are essential to enhance youth engagement in community policing initiatives for effective crime prevention. Primarily, the Ministry of Home Affairs, in collaboration with Local Government Authorities (LGAs), should establish a structured stipend or transport allowance framework to address the economic vulnerabilities of youth, thereby sustaining their participation without compromising their livelihoods. Additionally, the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) should directly link active youth security volunteers to government-backed economic empowerment initiatives, such as the 10% LGA loans, balancing voluntary civic duty with sustainable income generation. Furthermore, local government structures must mandate institutionalized youth representation within formal Ward Security Committees, effectively transitioning young people from passive operational actors into active decision-makers in local security planning.

Complementing economic and structural inclusion, relevant security agencies must address capacity and safety concerns to build institutional trust. The Tanzania Police Force and local ward security committees should implement confidential digital reporting platforms paired with robust whistleblower protection mechanisms to safeguard young informants, eliminate the pervasive fear of criminal retaliation, and rebuild public trust. Concurrently, ward security offices, in partnership with civil society organizations, ought to institutionalize continuous capacity-building programs and practical training workshops focused on crime detection, legal rights, evidence preservation, and safety protocols. Implementing these combined strategies will foster a more professional, motivated, and protected youth demographic capable of driving long-term community safety outcomes.

References

Adam, A., & Kawugana, A. (2025). Youth participation in community policing and crime prevention: Emerging perspectives from developing countries. *Journal of Community Safety*, *18*(1), 45–61.

Ahmed, M., & Hassan, S. (2023). Institutional trust and police-community relations in East Africa. *African Security Review*, *32*(3), 215–230.

Ahmed, K., Mohamed, A., & Omar, H. (2025). Stakeholder perspectives on urban crime prevention: Empirical insights from community policing frameworks. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, *72,* 100582.

Ariel, B., Weinborn, C., & Sherman, L. W. (2017). Soft policing at hot spots—Do police community support officers work? *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, *13*(3), 277–317.

Blair, G., Christia, F., Miller, A., & Weinstein, J. (2024). *Crime, insecurity, and community policing*. Cambridge University Press.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101.

Bureau of Justice Assistance. (1994). *Understanding community policing: A framework for action*. U.S. Department of Justice.

Gill, C., Weisburd, D., Telep, C. W., Vitter, Z., & Bennett, T. (2014). Community-oriented policing to reduce crime, disorder and fear and increase satisfaction and legitimacy among citizens: A systematic review. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, *10*(4), 399–428.

Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of delinquency*. University of California Press.

Iwelumor, O. S., Adeleke, O. A., & Ogunleye, Y. O. (2025). Youth engagement and community safety: Contemporary approaches to participatory policing. *International Journal of Criminal Justice*, *20*(2), 88–105.

Izzaty, R. E., Suardiman, S. P., & Ayriza, Y. (2018). Focus group discussion techniques in qualitative data collection. *Journal of Social Sciences Research*, *12*(4), 45–58.

Kamugisha, M. (2020). Community policing and youth participation in Africa. *African Security Review*, 29(4), 310–326.

Khan, A., Rahman, M., & Zhao, X. (2026). Proactive community policing, spatial analysis, and crime prevention in high-density urban environments. *Urban Studies Journal*, *63*(1), 112–130.

Kimbosho, E. (2023). Urban expansion, security challenges, and local governance in Dodoma City. *Tanzania Journal of Development Studies*, *21*(1), 89–104.

Kumar, R., Singh, P., & Sharma, V. (2019). Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners. *Sage Publications*.

Li, J. C. M., Zhang, S. Y., Sun, I. Y., & Ho, A. S. K. (2024). Police legitimacy and procedural justice for children and youth: A scoping review of definitions, determinants, and consequences. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *9*, 1–15.

Linning, S. J., Eck, J. E., & Guerette, R. T. (2024). What is informal social control? A concept consensus review of recent criminological literature. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, *66*(1), 63–86.

Luckman, J., Smith, R., & Taylor, P. (2016). Ensuring rigor and trustworthiness in qualitative health and social research. *Qualitative Health Research*, *26*(8), 1102–1114.

Maidawa, A. (2023). Rapid urbanization and the dynamics of urban crime in capital cities. *Journal of African Urban Studies*, 15(2), 145–162.

Marfo, E., Boateng, F. D., & Aning, K. (2021). Community policing in Ghana: Challenges and opportunities for youth participation. *Policing and Society*, *31*(8), 965–982.

Mburu, P. (2021). Case study design in social science research: Application and implementation. *East African Journal of Social Sciences*, *9*(2), 77–93.

Mnyawami, N. (2022). Youth participation and community policing in Tanzania. *Tanzania Journal of Sociology*, *8*(2), 101–118.

Modise, T. (2023). Evaluating the operational hurdles of neighborhood watch schemes in Southern Africa. *African Journal of Criminology*, *11*(1), 34–50.

Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (2013). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. ACTS Press.

Mwakalobo, A. (2021). Institutional challenges affecting community policing implementation in Tanzania. *African Journal of Public Administration*, *15*(3), 201–218.

Mwangi, J., Omwenga, J., & Kiprop, S. (2025). Multi-actor collaboration and youth radicalization reduction in urban Kenya. *East African Journal of Peace and Human Rights*, 31(1), 54–72.

Nwaogwugwu, C., Okonkwo, I., & Eze, E. (2025). Quantitative assessment of community policing and youth empowerment on urban safety. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, *48*(2), 201–219.

Nwankwo, C., Chukwu, E., & Okoro, O. (2024). Economic vulnerabilities and volunteer sustainability in grassroots security operations. *Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, *19*(2), 88–104.

Nubani, L., Wineman, J., & Woolf, S. (2023). Spatial configurations, social expectations, and perception of safety in urban neighborhoods. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, *40*(3), 180–198.

Odhiambo, G., Ochieng, P., & Anyango, C. (2025). Community vetting, shared ownership, and local security enhancement. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, *40*(1), 15–29.

Panchenko, O., & Samovilova, N. (2020). Secondary data sources in social and criminological research: Methodological review. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *23*(4), 411–425.

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Sage Publications.

Skogan, W. G. (2006). *Police and community in Chicago: A tale of three cities*. Oxford University Press.

Sospeter, N., & Kaburire, M. (2025). Assessing community policing strategies in reducing urban crime in Chang'ombe Ward, Dodoma City. *Tanzania Journal of Public Security and Safety*, *4*(1), 12–28.

Trojanowicz, R., & Bucqueroux, B. (1990). *Community policing: A contemporary perspective*. Anderson Publishing Company.

Tyler, T. R. (2004). Enhancing police legitimacy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *593*(1), 84–99.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2013). *Training manual on policing urban space and youth engagement*. United Nations.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2023). *Global report on youth engagement in crime prevention and community safety*. United Nations.

United Republic of Tanzania. (2024). *National community policing guidelines and operational framework*. Ministry of Home Affairs.

Weerawardhana, S., & Wijewardhana, K. (2024). Re-evaluating community policing theory in developing democracies. *Asian Journal of Criminology*, *19*(2), 145–163.