

PP6. INCREASING CITIZENS' TRUST IN COMMUNITY POLICING PROGRAMS

[Tags: Community policing, Accountability, Transparency]

A culture of openness and accountability builds trust between the police and the community, while also enabling community policing programs to work more effectively. The public relates to public bodies through trust and confidence in their performance and the quality of the service they provide, which are communicated transparently and comprehensibly. To gain the public's trust the police as a public body is therefore tasked with providing the public with relevant and accurate information on all issues under their responsibility, and of keeping communication channels open for interaction with the public. Trust-building should also be carried out in the opposite direction, by fostering police trust in citizens and recognizing them as credible and valuable interlocutors.

The use of ICT, and social media in particular, may help create this climate of trust and also greater accountability in the police in its attitude towards the public.

Community policing programs must have clear and transparent procedures to prevent, detect and punish the community policing personnel violating their legal or ethical obligations.

Examples:

- The UK Neighbourhood Watch Network ethics and standards guidelines for members and groups are an example of police ethical guidelines which transparency in the police– citizens' relationship.
- Boston Police Department community policing and social media strategy

Mode of implementation

- Trust-building tools should always be developed by taking into account the local situation and needs;
- A key aspect of trust is the need to guarantee citizens' privacy;
- Always be accurate, open, fair, honest and transparent in what you communicate to the public;
- Enable public access to information to achieve transparency. This can be achieved by creating points of contact with the community, such as specially designated and trained communication officers;
- Continuous provision of general information on police services and activities;
- Continuous provision of digital information nodes, linking to other government and social services;
- Add a "human side" to policing, e.g. by reporting on daily police activities in the community;
- Document and report unlawful police actions;
- Using ICT to provide an exchange information and/or to publicize success stories in the fight against crime;
- Display a friendly attitude to the public;
- Create win-win situations for all stakeholders;
- Seek to achieve a good balance between individual rights and community security needs;

- Promote strong senior leaders who provide clear direction to the organisation about the value of securing public trust;
- Raise awareness, throughout the organization, of the value to policing of increasing public trust.

Resources:

- Chainey, Spencer, Tompson, Lisa: "Engagement, Empowerment and Transparency: Publishing Crime Statistics using Online Crime Mapping", 2012, p.228.
- Ben Tran, "The Evolution of Business Ethics to Business Law" in Management Association: Information Resources, ed, Human Rights and Ethics: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2015) 145.
- Cyndi Banks, Criminal Justice Ethics: Theory and Practice, 2nd ed (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009).
- J. Hyon Kang, "Participation in the Community Social Control, the Neighborhood Watch Groups: Individual and Neighborhood Related Factors, Crime & Delinquency" (2015) 61(2) 188 -212.