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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY POLICING AND ITS IMPACT ON IMPROVING PUBLIC SAFETY IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

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Abstract

Community policing represents a contemporary approach to public security, aimed at building sustainable cooperation between the police and the community in order to prevent crime and increase public trust. This paper seeks to analyze the effectiveness of community policing and its impact on improving public safety in the Republic of Kosovo. Through an analysis of relevant literature, institutional documents, and empirical data (survey research), the study examines the role of community policing in preventing criminal offenses, increasing citizens' sense of security, and strengthening public order. The findings indicate that successful implementation of community policing contributes to improved relations between the police and citizens, increased institutional transparency, and more efficient responses to security challenges. However, the study also identifies certain challenges, such as limited resources, the need for continuous training, and greater community involvement in decision-making processes. In conclusion, the paper emphasizes the importance of strengthening community policing as a key mechanism for enhancing public safety and social stability in the Republic of Kosovo.

Keywords: Community policing; public safety; crime prevention; public trust; Kosovo.

COMMON GROUND

1.Introduction

Public safety constitutes one of the fundamental pillars for the functioning of the state and the well-being of a democratic society. In this context, the police play a key role in maintaining public order, preventing crime, and ensuring citizens' security. However, contemporary security challenges have shown that traditional policing models, which are mostly reactive, are not always sufficient to effectively respond to the needs of the community. As a result, community policing has emerged as a modern and comprehensive approach, aimed at fostering active collaboration between the police and citizens.The development of crime trends, the dynamics of the movement of people and goods, the rapid advancement of technology, past security challenges in communities, as well as Kosovo's aspirations for European integration, have all created a demand both from citizens and the police itself to advance a genuine partnership between the community and law enforcement. This approach is applied with the goal of improving the quality of life and safety in the community through mutual cooperation in addressing and preventing negative phenomena and various types of crime that could potentially occur in the community.Community policing is based on building sustainable partnerships with the community, increasing mutual trust, and involving citizens in identifying and resolving security issues. This approach emphasizes crime prevention, open communication, and institutional transparency, positioning the police not only as law enforcement authorities but also as a service dedicated to the community. In many countries, the successful implementation of community policing has contributed to a reduction in crime and an increase in the sense of public safety.In Kosovo, community policing has become part of institutional security strategies, aiming to improve relations between the Kosovo Police and citizens, as well as to address security challenges at the local level. However, despite institutional efforts, it remains necessary to scientifically assess the effectiveness of this approach and its real impact on improving public safety.Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the effectiveness of community policing and its impact on improving public safety in Kosovo, focusing on the role of police–community collaboration, crime prevention, and citizens' perceptions of security. The study contributes to the enrichment of scientific literature and provides practical recommendations for improving community policing policies and practices.

2. Different Models and the Importance of Community Policing

As a concept, community policing can be understood as a policing philosophy. It primarily emerged from the need to change the way policing was conducted in the past; this was due to the failure of traditional policing, characterized by a centralized and bureaucratic organization—a model that was unable to address the challenges of contemporary society, including the growing public distrust of the police.[1]Traditional policing represents the classic model of police activity, which is mainly based on responding to criminal acts after they occur, strict law enforcement, and general patrolling to maintain public order.[2] In this model, the role of the police focuses on controlling crime through arrests, investigations, and punishments, with limited emphasis on proactive prevention and collaboration with the community. This type of policing is characterized by a hierarchical structure, centralized decision-making, and limited communication with citizens.[3]Although traditional policing has historically contributed to the establishment of order and state authority, various studies have shown that its effect on long-term crime reduction and the enhancement of public trust is limited. For this reason, in a contemporary context, traditional policing is considered a functional foundation but not sufficient without the integration of modern approaches oriented toward the community and proactive crime prevention.[4]

Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP)-It is a business model and a managerial philosophy in which data analysis and crime intelligence are central to achieving objectives. It represents a decision-making framework that facilitates crime and problem reduction, avoids mismatches between management strategies and effective law-enforcement strategies, and targets serious and multi-faceted offenders.[5] Intelligence-led policing emphasizes analysis and processed information as the core elements of an objective decision-making framework that sets priorities regarding crime hot spots,

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[1] Liou, Kuotsai Tom, and Eugene G. Savage. "Citizens' Perceptions of the Impact of Community Policing." *Public Administration Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1996, p. 163.

[2] David H. Bayley. *Police for the Future*. Oxford University Press, 1994.

3 Wesley G. Skogan and Kathleen Frydl, editors. *Fairness and Effectiveness in Policing: The Evidence*. National Academies Press, 2004.

4 Herman Goldstein. *Problem-Oriented Policing*. McGraw-Hill, 1990.

5 Jerry H. Ratcliffe. *Pocket Guide to Intelligence-Led Policing*. 2008, www.jratcliffe.net. Accessed June 2008.

repeat victims, repeat offenders, and criminal groups. It contributes to the reduction of crime and its consequences, as well as to the prevention and suppression of criminal activities through strategic and tactical management, appropriate allocation of resources, and effective law enforcement.[6]Broken Windows Policing-Broken Windows Policing represents a theory and approach to public safety that emphasizes the importance of addressing minor offenses and social disorder as a means of preventing more serious crimes. This theory was first formulated by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling in 1982, arguing that tolerance of small signs of disorder-such as vandalism, litter, or antisocial behavior-creates a perception of lack of control and encourages serious crime.[7] According to this approach, an active police presence and a rapid response to minor offenses increase citizens' sense of safety and strengthen trust in law-enforcement institutions. Broken Windows Policing has been widely implemented in several cities, particularly in the United States during the 1990s, and has been associated with reductions in crime levels and improvements in public order.[8] Hot Spots Policing-This type of policing focuses on concentrating police activities-without being limited solely to intensive patrols-in geographically small areas that have historically generated a high volume of calls for police service and criminal incidents.[9] Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated that hot spots policing has a positive effect on crime reduction, particularly in cases of violent crime and property-related offenses. Moreover, this approach does not cause significant displacement of crime to other areas, as was initially assumed.[10]

Reassurance Policing-This term is more commonly used in the United Kingdom and focuses on reducing the causes of public insecurity by addressing so-called "signal crimes," which are mainly

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[6] OSCE. *Guide on Intelligence-Led Policing*. 2017, p. 18.

[7] James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling. "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety." *Atlantic Monthly*, 1982.

[8] George L. Kelling and Catherine M. Coles. *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities*. Free Press, 1996.

[9] David Weisburd and Anthony A. Braga. "Hot Spots Policing as a Model for Police Innovation." *Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*, edited by David Weisburd and Anthony A. Braga, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

[10] David Weisburd, Charlotte W. Telep, Jeffrey C. Hinkle, and John E. Eck. "Is Problem-Oriented Policing Effective in Reducing Crime and Disorder?." *Criminology & Public Policy*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2010, pp. 139–172.

minor disorders and low-level offenses that nonetheless serve as indicators or warning signs of problems that may escalate. This approach integrates problem-solving methods and has clear parallels with "Broken Windows" policing and community policing.[11] The core of reassurance policing lies in building trust between the police and the community, giving priority to prevention, rapid response, and transparency in police actions. By identifying local problems and actively involving citizens in addressing them, this approach contributes to reducing fear of crime and improving quality of life within the community.[12]

Problem-Oriented Policing**-**Problem-oriented policing is an approach to policing in which each small unit of police work (each unit consisting of a group of similar incidents, criminal offenses, or disorderly conduct) is subjected to a detailed, microscopic examination, with the aim that every identified problem becomes the basis for developing new and more effective strategies to address it. Problem-oriented policing places strong emphasis on new forms of response that are preventive in nature, do not rely on the use of the criminal justice system, and involve other public agencies, the community, and the private sector, whose participation has the potential to contribute to reducing the problem.[13]

3. Community Policing Techniques

The essential prerequisite of the police–public partnership is that the level of community participation in strengthening security and social order, as well as in addressing community-related crime problems, must be increased, because the police cannot fulfill this task alone.[14] Before presenting some of the well-known community policing (CP) strategies and techniques used worldwide, it is important to emphasize that, in order to achieve the legitimacy of police actions, policing programs and their techniques must be accepted and supported by the communities themselves.Neighbourhood Watch is a very popular community policing technique, also known

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[11] Andrew Millie and Victoria Herrington. *Reassurance Policing in Practice: Views from the Shop Floor*. London: British Society of Criminology, 2005.

[12] Tuffin, R., Morris, J., & Poole, A. (2006). *An evaluation of the impact of the National Reassurance Policing Programme*. Home Office Research Study.

[13] Herman Goldstein. "Problem-Oriented Policing in a Nutshell." Presentation at the *International Problem-Oriented Policing Conference*, San Diego, California, 2001.

[14] Kevin Carty. *Good Practices for Building Police–Public Partnerships*. OSCE, 2008, p. 11.

as "the building watches" or "the apartment watches." [15]Representatives of different neighbourhoods have welcomed this initiative and at the same time have offered close cooperation with the police, especially in cases of theft and in the prevention of such incidents. Local police officers or community organizations initially organize introductory meetings within the neighbourhood.[16] Subsequent meetings include presentations and listening sessions, aimed at strengthening and establishing networks for surveillance and mutual support. Meeting participants discuss and share their perceptions of local crime problems and identify solutions to address them. This technique, initially used by Anglo-Saxon police forces, has also been adopted by Scandinavian countries. [17] Open Meetings in Neighborhoods and Towns help maintain ongoing contact between the police and the public. For these open meetings, the Kosovo Police have established a group of highly professional officers aimed at fostering cooperation and preventing crime. [18]

These partnership meetings with citizens, through various forms, serve as the main platform for determining policing priorities, identifying the main causes of crime, and addressing various conflicts within society.[19] Unlike "neighbourhood watch" meetings, which are held in local residential areas, neighborhood and town meetings take place in public open spaces, such as schools or community centers, and are well-publicized to ensure the highest possible participation. These meetings provide a forum for exchanging information and a space for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing problems within a community or neighborhood.[20] Public Education Programs- Education programs are important techniques through which the police can inform and educate the public to avoid and prevent crime. The concept of police–public relations gains significant importance when the police embrace community policing and crime prevention as primary public safety responsibilities. These programs involve a range of methods, the most common being

[15] *Manual for Community Policing*. Tirana, 2015, p. 16.
[16] https://www.kosovopolice.com/vrojtuesit-e-lagjes/
[17] Dennis Rosenbaum, editor, *The Theory and Research Behind Neighborhood Watch: Is It a Sound Fear and Crime Reduction Strategy?*, *Crime and Delinquency*, vol. 33, no. 1 (1987), 103–134.
[18] www.kosovopolice.com
[19] *Strategy and Action Plan 2012–2016: Community Policing.* Kosovo Police, 2012, p. 10.
[20] M. A. Wycoff and W. Skogan, *Community Policing in Madison: Quality from the Inside Out. An Evaluation of Implementation and Impact* (Washington, D.C.: Police Foundation, 1993).

lectures in schools or public forums.[21] One of the best-known programs in this field is DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education). Established in Los Angeles in 1983, DARE involves a police officer who conducts a series of classroom lessons, teaching children from kindergarten through 12th grade to resist the pressure to use drugs. This program has been implemented in 75% of U.S. school districts and in more than 43 countries worldwide.[22] Joint Patrols Between Police and Citizens-Joint patrols between the police and citizens are part of the philosophy of community policing, in which the police build partnerships with residents to enhance safety, share information, and collaboratively address security problems within neighborhoods.[23] These patrols often involve supervision alongside volunteers, street-by-street meetings, or foot patrols where officers interact directly with residents. This technique is a synthesis of well-structured methods that engage local residents in securing physical and social environments. The core idea is that those who live in and are active within the local community possess more knowledge about the state of security than the police. This technique was first piloted in the city of Gothenburg (Sweden) and later expanded throughout the country.[24]

Neighborhood/Area Police Stations-Neighborhood police stations are techniques successfully applied to increase police–public cooperation. These stations are described as "simple forms of police stations," with limited working hours and 4-6 officers who maintain a visible presence in the residential area where they operate.[25] Small stations are part of efforts to decentralize the police and bring them closer to the communities they serve. They are usually located in problem areas and consist of police officers, paid civilians, and volunteers. Another function of small police stations is to share information with the public, provide advice, and prevent crime.[26] Within these stations, there are designated sectoral areas, and each sector has assigned police officers responsible for that zone. These officers do not handle criminal cases; instead, they focus solely

[21] *Institute for Democracy and Mediation.* 2005, p. 2.
[22] http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/youthandthelaw/roots/volume5/ preventing03_community_polcing.aspx
[23] https://plataformadeevidencias.iadb.org/en/tipos-solucoes/community-oriented-policing.
[24] Manual for Community Policing, Tirana, 2015, p. 20.
[25] Polisen .se/en/Languages/The Swedish/Police/Direction-/21-independent-policeauthorities/Stockholm-County-Police/SpecialInitiatives/Neighbourhood-Police-Service/
[26] http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/ topics/youthandthelaw/roots/volume5/ preventing03_community_polcing.aspx.

on collaboration with citizens and addressing their concerns, while patrol units handle the actual cases.[27] Weed and Seed Program-The Weed and Seed program is an integrated public safety strategy developed in the United States, aimed at reducing crime and revitalizing high-risk communities. The approach is based on two main pillars: "Weed", which involves strong law enforcement measures to remove criminal elements from problem areas, and "Seed", which includes social investments such as education, employment, social services, and community engagement to build long-term stability. The program emphasizes inter-agency cooperation and active community participation as key factors for its success.[28]Foot Patrols and Door-to-Door Visits-Foot patrols and door-to-door visits are seen as effective techniques that increase the sense of security and strengthen cooperation with the community.[29] It is believed that a greater police presence not only prevents crime but also puts the patrol officer in direct contact with the community.[30] Foot patrols allow for direct interaction with residents, a better understanding of local issues, and a faster response to citizens' concerns. Meanwhile, door-to-door visits serve to inform residents, identify their needs, and strengthen collaboration between the police and the community, contributing to crime prevention and an increased sense of safety.[31]Virtual Policing (Facebook Police)-The virtual policing technique (or "Facebook police") represents a modern form of community policing, where the police use social media to communicate directly with citizens, share preventive information, and increase institutional transparency.[32] This approach has proven successful in many countries. For young people, it is easier to communicate with a "Facebook police officer," with a face and a name, than to fill out official forms or request an appointment at

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[27] "Almost Every Neighborhood in the Capital Has Neighborhood Police," *Indeks Online*, accessed November 1, 2025, https://indeksonline.net/pothuajse-cdo-lagje-ne-kryeqytet-ka-policine-e-lagjes/.

[28] Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). Weed and Seed Implementation Manual, U.S. Department of Justice.

[29] http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/ topics/youthandthelaw/roots/volume5/ preventing03_community_polcing.aspx

[30] Robert Trojanowicz dhe Bonnie Bucqueroux, *Community Policing: A Contemporary Perspective* (Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing, 1990).

[31] Wesley G. Skogan, *Police and Community in Chicago: A Tale of Three Cities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[32] Andrew Goldsmith, "Policing's New Visibility," *British Journal of Criminology* 55, nr. 5 (2015): 914–934.

a police station. Experiences from Sweden and Estonia show that virtual communication serves both crime-fighting and crime-prevention purposes.[33]

4. Citizen Survey and Their Assessments of Community Policing in Kosovo

A survey on citizens' assessments of police services was conducted during the period of November–December 2025. The main objective of this research was to analyze citizens' perceptions of police services, with a special focus on community policing, as well as to measure the impact of police activity on the daily lives of citizens.The study was carried out in five main regions of Kosovo: Prishtina, Prizren, Ferizaj, Gjakova, and Mitrovica. In each city, 100 citizens were interviewed, ensuring equal and balanced representation of public opinion in these areas. The total number of respondents who participated in this study was 500 citizens.This survey provides important data for understanding citizens' awareness of the concept of community policing, their perception of police efficiency and presence, as well as for identifying community needs and expectations for greater cooperation with the police. Through this study, it is possible to analyze not only the relationships between citizens and the police but also the direct impact of police activities on the community's sense of security and trust. The collected data will serve as a basis for improving community policing strategies and for developing programs aimed at increasing interaction and collaboration between the police and citizens.

5. Analysis and Interpretation of Survey Results

The results presented in Figure 1 show that the vast majority of respondents, specifically 420 citizens (84.0%), reported feeling safe in their community. This result suggests a high level of positive perception regarding public safety, which may be directly linked to the presence and effectiveness of community policing.On the other hand, 50 respondents (10.0%) indicated that they feel somewhat unsafe, while a smaller percentage, 30 respondents (6.0%), stated that they feel very unsafe. Although these percentages are relatively low, they indicate that a segment of the

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[33] Manual for Community Policing, Tirana, 2015, p. 19.

population still experiences insecurity, signaling the need for further interventions aimed at strengthening preventive measures and improving police communication with citizens.[34]
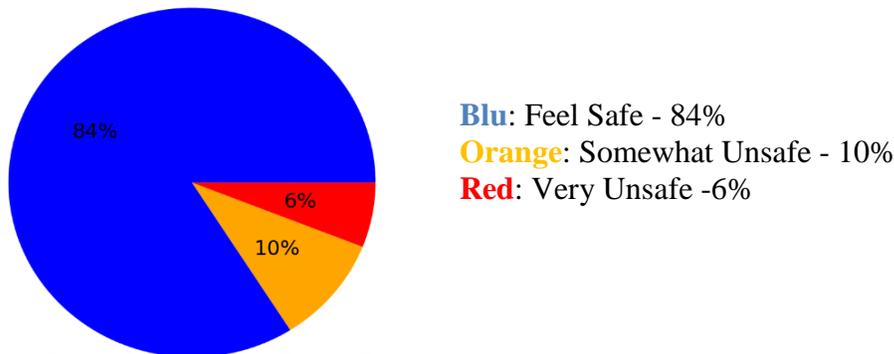

Blu: Feel Safe - 84%
Orange: Somewhat Unsafe - 10%
Red: Very Unsafe -6%

Figure 1. Citizens Perception of Safety

5.1.Citizens' Relations with the Police

The data presented in Figure 2 show that half of the respondents, specifically 245 citizens (49%), state that they have good relations with the Police. This result reflects a satisfactory level of cooperation and communication between the police and the community. However, a considerable proportion of respondents 150 individuals (30%) report having very limited relations with the Police, while 105 respondents (21%) declare that they have no relations at all with any police officer. These findings suggest that, despite the positive perceptions held by a large segment of citizens, there remains a communication gap between the police and part of the community, which may negatively affect the building of trust and long-term cooperation.

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[34] Source: Data processed from the survey, 2025.

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Blu: Good relations with the Police -49%
Red: Very limited relations with the Police -30%
Orange: No relations with police officers- 21%

Figure 2. Citizens' Relations with the Police

5.2.Perception of Community Policing

The results presented in Figure 3 indicate that 450 respondents (90%) state that they fully understand the concept of community policing, including close cooperation between the police and citizens, as well as police activities within the community. This high level of awareness suggests that informational strategies and community policing practices have been successful in conveying the objectives and principles of this policing model. Meanwhile, 50 respondents (10%) report that they only partially understand this concept, which implies that there is still a need to intensify informational and educational campaigns in order to ensure the full involvement of all citizens in community cooperation processes.
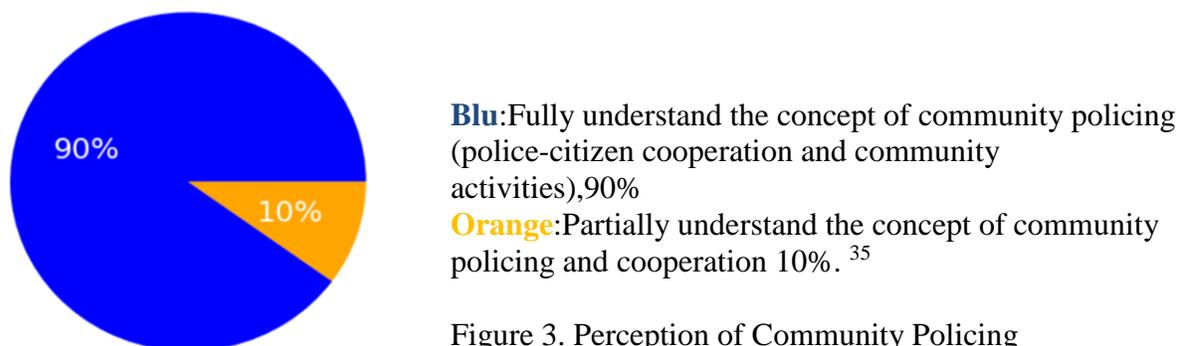

Blu:Fully understand the concept of community policing (police-citizen cooperation and community activities),90%
Orange:Partially understand the concept of community policing and cooperation 10%. [35]

Figure 3. Perception of Community Policing

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[35] Source: Data processed from the survey ,2025.

5.3.Citizens' Trust and Improvement in Community Policing

The results in Figure 4 show that a considerable majority of respondents, 381 citizens (76.2%), express full trust in the police and perceive a noticeable improvement in community policing. This outcome is a clear indicator of the effectiveness of the reforms and practices implemented within the framework of community policing. On the other hand, 32 respondents (6.4%) report having moderate trust in the police, while 87 respondents (17.4%) state that they have no trust at all and believe that no improvement has occurred in this regard. These findings indicate that, despite the progress made, it remains essential for the police to address the concerns of this group of citizens by increasing transparency, accountability, and the direct involvement of the community in decision-making.
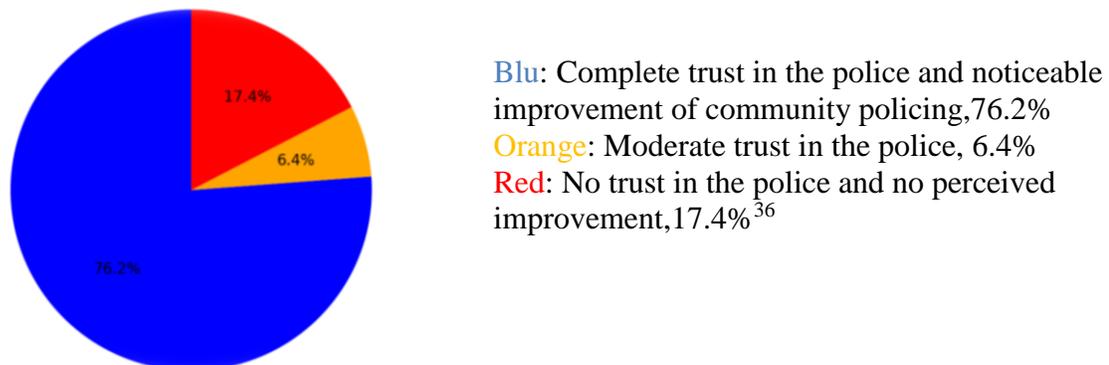

Blu: Complete trust in the police and noticeable improvement of community policing,76.2%
Orange: Moderate trust in the police, 6.4%
Red: No trust in the police and no perceived improvement,17.4% [36]

Figure 4. Citizens' Trust and Improvement in Community Policing

6.Conclusion

Community policing represents an effective and essential approach for ensuring public order and safety in the Republic of Kosovo. The study shows that continuous cooperation between the police and citizens, open communication, and timely information gathering are key factors in identifying and preventing criminal activities. The effectiveness of community policing is closely linked to strategic planning, the implementation of organized activities, coordination with other security structures, and the trust citizens have in police institutions.The results of this study indicate that

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[36] Source: Data processed from the survey ,2025.

community policing can create a sustainable climate of safety, preventing crime and improving citizens' quality of life. Furthermore, respecting human rights and freedoms during police operations, in accordance with international standards, increases the legitimacy of police work and strengthens public trust.Overall, community policing is not only a law enforcement tool but also an important mechanism for building social cooperation and improving public safety across all communities in Kosovo. The study on the effectiveness of community policing in the Republic of Kosovo shows that this policing model has had a positive and tangible impact on public safety and on strengthening relations between the police and the community.Analysis of the data collected from 500 citizens reveals that a significant majority (84%) feel safe in their communities, reflecting a high level of positive perception of safety. Additionally, 90% of citizens fully understand the concept of community policing and the importance of police-citizen cooperation, while 76.2% express full trust in the police and acknowledge the visible improvements brought by this policing model.These results confirm that community policing practices-including joint patrols, meetings with citizens, local police stations, and educational programs-contribute to building trust, transparency, and active citizen engagement in crime prevention. However, the portion of citizens who feel somewhat or very unsafe, as well as those reporting limited interaction with the police (31%) or lack of trust (17.4%), indicates that challenges remain, such as the need for additional resources, ongoing training, and increased community engagement.Consequently, community policing in Kosovo shows promising results and represents an effective strategy for enhancing public safety. To achieve full efficiency and sustainable positive citizen perceptions, it is recommended to strengthen police-community partnerships, increase citizen interaction, and develop continuous educational and preventive programs. This model serves as a key tool for social stability, crime prevention, and the advancement of trust-based relationships between police institutions and the community.

Recommendations:

1. Strengthening police capacities for communication and cooperation with citizens through regular training and community awareness programs.
2. Implementing information collection and analysis systems to prevent crime and enable faster responses to unlawful activities.

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3. Developing strategic community policing plans that take into account the specific characteristics of urban and rural areas.
4. Increasing coordination between the police and other security institutions for more effective management of incidents and emergencies.
5. Enhacing citizens' trust in local police through transparency, acceptance of complaints, and active community participation in decision-making.
6. Promoting respect for human rights and international standards in all police activities to ensure sustainable and legitimate security.
7. Establishing regular community forums and meetings where citizens can openly discuss safety concerns and collaborate with police on local solutions.
8. Expending youth engagement programs and school partnerships to prevent delinquency and promote positive relationships between young people and police officers.
9. Increasing the visibility of police presence through foot patrols and neighborhood-based officers to improve accessibility and sense of security.
10. Using digital platforms and social media to improve communication, share safety information, and encourage community reporting of concerns.

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