

## **Problem Oriented and Community Equity Policing 8**

For more information on the model programs discussed, see Links.

To stabilize the poor communities -- and so to promote **community-based development corporations and banking** -- new forms of policing have evolved over the last 20 years. They include the interrelated notions of problem-oriented policing, community-based policing, and community equity policing. See the **Citations** at the end of this section. For more information see the **Police Executive Research Forum** and the **Police Foundation**. Under **Publications**, see **Youth Investment and Police Mentoring**.

### **Problem-Oriented and Community-Based Policing**

In problem-oriented policing, the concept is not to react to crime after it occurs, which is what most American police do, but to prevent crime before it occurs by dealing with some of the problems that cause crime.

For example, in a comparison group demonstration evaluated by the Police Executive Research Forum in Newport News, Virginia, the burglary rate in high-crime public housing was reduced by 35 percent during a 2- year period. This was done not through making more arrests after crimes had occurred, but rather by improving maintenance of public-housing properties, among other preventive strategies.

A much looser concept than problem-oriented policing is community-based policing. According to Herman Goldstein at the University of Wisconsin, the term community policing today is used "to encompass practically all innovations in policing, from the ambitious to the mundane, from the most carefully thought through to the most casual."

In one of the first-used definitions, community-based policing meant getting officers out of cars and onto foot patrols. On foot, police can interact better with neighborhood residents, become their friends, report suspicious events, and sometimes build on friendships to pursue problem-oriented policing. However, there is little scientific evaluation evidence that community-based policing in the form of foot patrols reduces crime *per se*. Evaluations by the **Police Foundation** and others in Flint, Michigan; Kansas City, Missouri; Newark, New Jersey; Houston, Texas; and New York City all point to this conclusion. Some findings indicate a reduction in residents' *fear* of crime as a result of police foot patrols. This fear reduction occurs mostly in middle-class urban neighborhoods, not inner-city locations.

### **Community Equity Policing**

Community equity policing links problem-oriented, community-based policing to youth development.

As developed by the Eisenhower Foundation in inner-city locations, community equity policing is grounded in a physical structure, a safe haven for youth that is run by civilians, combined with a police ministration that shares the same space. Typically, the safe haven-ministations are most active from about 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. weekdays. The safe haven-ministations also are designed as magnets to attract other programs at or near the same locations.

Paid civilian and police staff at each safe haven-ministation give priority to advocating for, near-peering counseling and mentoring high-risk youth. Staff work with these youth

throughout the replication. Paid staff concentrates on helping youth with their homework, tutoring, learning through computers, providing social support and discipline to youth in their school activities and personal lives, providing positive role models, solving problems at home by sitting down with both parents and youth, developing youth at school through weekly liaison with teachers and other school staff, providing recreational opportunities, undertaking preemployment and employment training, locating summer job opportunities, and teaching life skills (like how to save money and start a bank account or how to peacefully resolve conflicts with others). The goal is to develop youth, keep youth in school, improve their grades, keep them out of trouble, and make it possible to go on to college, if youth so choose.

Police spend about half their time counseling and mentoring youth and about half their time undertaking patrolling on foot or on bicycle, using the safe haven-ministation as home base. Civilians from the nonprofit youth development organizations joint police on foot patrols and jointly strive to build community trust. Police are screened by citizens and then training in how to counsel, coach and mentor neighborhood youth. Patrol activity includes safe passage of youth to and from school. A high priority is placed on youth and parents learning to trust police and vice versa. The goal is to develop youth and reduce serious crime in the neighborhood. Policing is problem-oriented. Police and citizens identify the source of a problem and jointly create a solution. The process is proactive, not reactive.

Whenever possible, police who grew up in the neighborhood are selected, and they work hard on creating trust with youth, who initially often see police as their enemies. If police are not presently living in the neighborhood, they are encouraged to do so. Police officers and nonprofit youth development organizations carefully maintain the roles of equal partners. A nonprofit youth development organization has the overall organizational lead and is the entity with fiduciary responsibility for administering national funding from the Eisenhower Foundation. Police officers report to their police supervisor and coordinate closely with the civilian director of the replication. A careful balance is maintained. The supervisor is in weekly contact with the civilian program director to insure that program coordination is maintained and that any managerial or accountability problems that emerge are quickly resolves.

If any problems cannot be resolved at this level, they are jointly resolved by the police chief, the overall civilian director of the nonprofit youth development organization and the Eisenhower Foundation. Must funding from the Foundation is for operation of the nonprofit youth development organization. Police may receive funding, including funding to cover costs of evaluation data collection based on police records. The police chief assigns 2 or 3 officers as local in-kind match. The police chief requires that *both* these officers *and* their commanders receive training in mentoring the principles of the program.

Conventionally, in such partnerships, police have control and civilians assist. Police are well-funded (including substantial federal support). Most nonprofit youth development organizations are chronically underfunded, at federal, state and local levels. Most national funding, from federal agencies and private foundations, was channeled by the Eisenhower Foundation to the nonprofit youth organizations, which had the organizational lead, while police agreed to assign officers as local match. Based on the

positive Index crime reduction and youth development outcomes from such institutional and financial relationships, we believe that replication of our concepts across the nation to a scale equal to the dimensions of the problems is one cost-effective venue for better funding and developing the institutional capacity of nonprofit organizations, while at the same time crediting police with success. *Wise replication policy can create win-win outcomes, when it comes to youth development nonprofits and police.*

Such community equity policing already has been replicated in 2 generations of replications in the 1990s. (Third and fourth generation work now is underway.) For *all* first *and* second generation sites, FBI Index crime was reduced. For example, in the first generation, in 4 cities -- San Juan, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago -- a quasi-experimental evaluation design showed serious crime to decline by at least 22 percent and by as much as 27 percent over a minimum of 3 years. Across the 4 cities, the decline in the 4 target neighborhoods where the police-community partnerships were replicated was significantly greater statistically than for either the surrounding precincts or cities as a whole.

In addition, in all first and second generation community equity policing sites, race and community relations improved with community equity policing. In Memphis, community equity policing succeeded where a Weed and Seed program did not. By contrast, get tough "zero-tolerance" policing, which is fashionable but unevaluated for the most part, often has reduced crime *at the expense* of good race and community relations, as is the case in New York City.

In addition, zero tolerance policing has been poorly evaluated. For example, in New York and other cities, zero tolerance never has been evaluated in a quasi-experimental design, with, for example, some precincts experiencing it and some not. New York City did experience a crime drop during the time when its zerotolerance policy was put into effect. However, as Richard Moran at Mount Holyoke College has concluded, the New York City decline began 3 years before the zero-tolerance policy began. This suggests that the main reason for the decline may have been something other than zero tolerance. The most important explanation, concludes Moran, may have been the decline of the murderous crack turf wars among dealers in New York and other big cities.

Nationally, some cities which have implemented a zero-tolerance policy have experienced crime declines and some have not. For example, from 1991 to 1996, murder declined more rapidly in East St. Louis than in New York City, even though East St. Louis did not introduce zero tolerance. The sharp murder drop in East St. Louis occurred at a time when the police were so deeply in debt that police layoffs were common. Many police cars did not have functioning radios, and many cars were idle because there was no money for gas.

**8/ Citations:** This section is based on:

Currie, Elliott, *Crime and Punishment in America*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998(a).

Curtis, Lynn A. *Youth Investment and Police Mentoring: Final Report*. Washington, DC: The Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation, 1998.

Goldstein, Herman. Forward. In Dennis Rosenbaum, Editor. *The Challenge of Community Policing: Testing the Promises*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994.

The Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation. *Youth Investment and Police Mentoring*. Washington, DC: The Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation, 2000.