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Integrating Community-Oriented Policing and Traditional Justice Systems as Police Reform and Development in Post-Conflict Countries

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Abstract

Police reform in post-conflict countries has seen the increasing implementation of the community-oriented policing model as a means to introduce democratic policing as a component of the peace building process. However, in many post-conflict countries the situation of legal pluralism exists, where multiple justice systems operate in the same space. Many communities often rely on customary or traditional forms of justice as the formal state justice system does not extend to their location or have any real influence or authority.

This research project used document analysis to investigate the contribution community-oriented policing can make to those communities that rely on traditional justice systems. This report introduced two community-oriented policing mechanisms, *tara bandu* ceremonies in Timor-Leste and the Community Officer Project in Solomon Islands, as case studies. These two mechanisms were analysed and compared with a specific focus on their respective levels of community participation and how they responded to raising awareness of the principles of human rights.

The case study analysis found that the *tara bandu* ceremonies had high levels of community participation and support due to them being an endogenous social structure and the extensive involvement the communities had in developing their respective *tara bandu* ceremonies. This was in contrast to the Community Officer Project which is an introduced structure and one in which the community appeared to have no real input into the design and implementation process. These findings led to the conclusion that in integrating community-oriented policing and traditional justice systems, consideration should be given to utilising pre-existing traditional structures that have the support of the community.

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Glossary

Arbakai	Pashtun tribal security system in Southeast Afghanistan
<i>Horok</i>	Symbol of prohibition, hung from a tree
<i>Kastom-law</i>	Customary law
<i>Maklehat</i>	Person who holds the highest authority in <i>tara bandu</i> ceremonies
<i>Nehe biti</i>	Traditional resolution process
<i>Suco</i>	Village
<i>Tara bandu</i>	Traditional community resolution ceremony
<i>Xefe suko</i>	Head of village

Acronyms

CAP	Community Auxiliary Police
CO	Community Officer
COP	Community-Oriented Policing
BCPP	Bougainville Community Policing Programme
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PNTL	Policía Nacional de Timor-Leste
PPF	Participating Police Force
RSIPF	Royal Solomon Island Police Force
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
UN	United Nations
UNCIVPOL	United Nations Civilian Police (prior to 2003)
UNMIT	United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste
UNPOL	United Nations Police (post 2003)
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

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