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Perspectives on Community Policing Forum in Rural Areas of Limpopo Province, South Africa

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Abstract

This study critically analysed the implementation of the Community Policing Forums (CPFs) and operational practices of the South African Police Service (SAPS) officials in the rural area of Malamulele and Saselamani policing area, Limpopo Province. A random sample of five out of 10 sectors of Malamulele and Saselamani policing areas was drawn; 560 questionnaires were distributed and 477 were completed for analysis. The findings indicated that most of the respondents from the community answered in the negative to statements, thus indicating that the CPF concept was more popular with the local police than with the community members. The findings also indicated that although the local police have implemented CPFs in the Malamulele as well as Saselamani policing areas, these forums were dysfunctional as highlighted by significant levels of disagreement between the local police and the community members. No evidence suggests any initial effort by the local police to solicit community support for a CPF. From the findings, the local police seemed to believe that they practice community policing to some degree because they were directed by their standard operating procedure to make contact with the communities during their routine performance of duties. However, due to the significant level of disagreement between the respondents, it was clear that public awareness and better communication with the community at large is essential.

Keywords: Crime, Partnership, Policing, Perception, Rural.

Introduction

Section 206 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (hereinafter “the Constitution”) states that the Cabinet Minister responsible for policing must determine the national policing policy after consulting the provincial governments and taking into account the policing needs and priorities of the provinces as determined by the provincial

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executives. The identification of the policing needs and priorities is also mandated by Section 18.1(c) of the South African Police Service (SAPS) Act, No. 68 of 1995, which specifies that one of the objectives of a Community Police Forum (CPF) is to promote “co-operation between the service and the community in fulfilling the needs of the community regarding policing”. A number of years before Sekoto and Van Staaten (1999) advocated the adoption of a customer-focused approach to improve the quality of service delivery in the public service, the South African government recognized the potential advantages that this paradigm offers and committed itself a “customer first” revolution. This approach is widely used in the private sector and focuses on, among other things, quality service delivery, easier and expanded access to services, and continuous improvement in business practices (Sims, 2001 cited in Pietersen, 2014:253). The customer-focused approach was adopted by launching a number of initiatives aimed at improving service delivery in the public service sector to meet the needs of all South Africans. One such initiative is the WTPSPD, commonly known as the Batho Pele White Paper (Republic of South Africa, 1997). Batho Pele is a Sesotho phrase that translates as “people first” (Moran, 2002: 7 cited in Pietersen, 2014:253). The name was chosen to emphasize that the first and foremost duty of public service is to serve its customers. The WTPSPD includes both a policy framework and an implementation strategy to accelerate and improve service delivery to all South Africans. As such the White Paper is mainly concerned with how services are provided and to improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. The aim of the Batho Pele initiative is to get public servants to be service orientated, to strive for excellence in service delivery, commit themselves to continuous service delivery improvement, allow citizens to hold them accountable for the type of services they deliver and to adopt a citizen orientated approach to service delivery informed by eight principles (Briefing to the Portfolio Committee on the Batho Pele Programme for the Public Service, 2010). In order to achieve this aim, systems, procedures, attitudes, and behavior have to be developed within the public service to enhance customer service and meet the needs of customers. In other words, it strives to put “... the people first” (Republic of South Africa, 1997:12).

In conjunction with the mandate of the Constitution, the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele Principles) indicates “[c]itizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice as to the services being offered” (South Africa, 1997: 15). It further states that consultation can also help to foster a more participative and cooperative relationship between the providers and users of public services. In keeping with the Constitution, legislation and Batho Pele Principles, communities should be consulted with the purpose of determining their policing needs and priorities. Standards for the quality of services should be published at national, provincial and departmental levels. These standards must be relevant and meaningful to the individual user and be specific and measurable. Users should be able to judge whether the promised services were received or not (South Africa, 1997: 16-17). In terms of fostering sound relations and partnerships, Section 18(1)(c) of the SAPS Act, Act No. 68 of 1995, states “the Service shall, in order to achieve the objects contemplated in Section 215 of the Constitution, liaise with the community through CPFs and provincial community police boards, with a view to, among other things, promoting co-operation between the SAPS and the

community in fulfilling the needs of the community regarding policing” (South Africa, 1997: 16-17). This implies that increasing safety and crime prevention initiatives requires interrelated approaches from different role players. The approach adopted in identifying the policing needs and priorities was a holistic approach premised on the understanding that safety and security is not the sole responsibility of government, law enforcement agencies and justice but that non-governmental organisations (NGOs), businesses and ordinary citizens must play an active role in increasing safety within their communities. The SAPS came into being after the first democratic general election in 1994. The mission of SAPS is to (a) prevent and combat anything that may threaten the safety and security of any community; (b) investigate all crimes that threaten the safety and security of any community; (c) ensure offenders are brought to justice; and (d) participate in efforts to address the root causes of crime (SAPS Sector Policing, 2013). South Africa, just like most countries, is still experiencing an increase in crime, which impacts negatively on members of the community and the economy at large. In order to curb or reduce this high rate of crime that continues to increase, it is important that all stakeholders, including members of the police and community through CPFs, must come together and strategise together (Ngoveni, 2020).

Post-apartheid South Africa’s regional disparities in responding to crime and unemployment are rooted in the country’s pre-democratic racial discrimination policies (Kwenda, Ntuli & Mudiriza, 2020: 3). South Africa’s former homeland regions were home to approximately 20 million African South Africans until they were reincorporated into South Africa in 1994. Their physical land mass constituted slightly more than 13 percent of the total South African land mass and yet they housed approximately 50 percent of the African population. Homelands were situated in rural areas of South Africa with either low rainfall, poor soil quality or both (Mariotti, 2012:3). Although started during colonialism, race-based spatial segregation in South Africa was made more forceful by the apartheid system. White settlers’ competing demand for cheap labour in the agriculture and mining sectors weakened black African peasantry (Todes & Turok, 2018). The 1913 and 1936 Land Acts confined the majority black population to 13% of the country’s land. Ensuing loss of subsistence farming opportunities forced blacks into waged farm labour. Black men also entered into circular migration as cheap mine workers while their families stayed behind in the reserves (Todes & Turok, 2018; von Fintel, 2018). This migrant labour system was bolstered by the 1923 Native Urban areas Act which classified blacks as temporary residents in towns and disallowed them to buy or rent land in white areas (Todes & Turok, 2018). In 1948, the Nationalist Party ascended into power and institutionalised the apartheid system. This promoted separate development among the country’s racial groups but maintaining white hegemony. Importantly, the Bantustan or homelands policy was enacted to remove blacks from white urban areas to their ‘official’ residence in rural areas. The homelands only spanned the geographic area demarcated for blacks by the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts (von Fintel, 2018). Administratively, the Bantu Authority Act (1951), Bantu Self-Government Act (1959) and Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act (1970) allowed the homelands to be independent self-governing units. That is, blacks were marginalised from the country’s mainstream socioeconomic and political systems as they were declared homeland citizens (von Fintel, 2018). They also received poor quality education, public services and infrastructure than whites under the

Bantu Education Act (1953) and the Reservation of separate amenities Act (1953). Local unemployment was rife in homelands owing to non-existent formal economic opportunities.

In order to study policing in rural areas, it is important to define the definitions of 'rural' and 'urban', and to clarify their meaning in this research. The lack of standardisation regarding what constitutes the concept of “urban” has hampered comparative research by African urbanisation scholars (Collinson, Tollman & Kahn, 2007:77). The following categories were used by Collinson et al. (2007), using data from the 2001 national census. South Africa has a very varied range of settlement types, which include the following (based on Collinson, Kok & Ganenne, 2006) namely; (1) metropolitan formal, including large black and coloured townships joined to metropolitan areas; (2) other urban formal – these are non-metropolitan urban areas, such as secondary and tertiary towns, as well as many black and coloured townships; (3) urban informal (“informal settlements”), which are often on the peri-urban fringe; (4) former homeland areas: This category is highly simplified since it contains a rural-urban continuum, including formal “dormitory townships” or “dense rural settlements” (but without any economically functional core), small towns, agricultural villages, and small farms and; (5) commercial agriculture: This category contains the rural industry settlement type, often, but not exclusively based on white-owned farms and black or coloured farmworkers. District Municipalities are typically located in “deep rural” or “traditional” areas, consisting of traditional villages and communal land ownership (these were the erstwhile “homelands”). This study paper emanates from a bigger master’s dissertation, was conducted at the Vhembe district having four municipalities – Makhado, Musina, Mutale and the then, Thulamela, now referred to as Collins Chabane Municipality. All the four districts of the former Gazankulu homeland. Malamulele and Saselemani, are the two villages amongst many, within the Collins Chabane Municipality, where this study was conducted, as the first author resides in the Collins Chabane Municipality, which was deemed appropriate due to the limited scope of the study, accessibility to necessary data sources, cost and convenience. Integrity issues can arise when the decisions to select ‘appropriate’ data to collect are based primarily on cost and convenience considerations rather than the ability of data to adequately answer research questions. Certainly, cost and convenience are valid factors in the decision-making process. However, the first author did assess to what degree these factors might compromise the integrity of the research endeavour, by appointment of doctoral students, who assisted as fieldworkers. The South African census definitions of these terms changed significantly between 1996 and 2001. Until 1996, “urban” areas were defined as “areas with local authorities”, regardless of their spatial features. Since 2001, the definition has been based on spatial form and land use. Consequently, smallholdings, mining towns and residential peri-urban areas were henceforth classified as “urban” (StatsSA, 2001 cited in Kwenda et al., 2020: 3). In traditional areas, villages were still regarded as rural, but the bigger towns were reclassified as “urban”. A further complication is the changing boundaries of magisterial districts (which were the original unit of analysis in the censuses, and have now been replaced by municipal boundaries). In addition, municipal boundaries changed dramatically in 2000, when over 800 municipalities were consolidated in just over 300 municipalities. It is therefore problematic to attempt comparisons between regions over time, particularly before and after 2000.

Another dilemma is that virtually all South African data is collected according to municipal boundaries. But the constitutional classification of municipalities does not distinguish between municipalities in urban and rural areas. It is also important to note that many large urban or metro municipalities, such as eThekweni (Durban) and Tshwane (Pretoria), contain areas that are functionally rural (National Treasury 2011:192). Outside of the nine metropolitan municipalities, the only distinction made is between local (category B) and district (category C) municipalities. In terms of this definition, all South Africa's land surface (with the exception of the metros) falls within Local Municipalities (LMs); and several LMs combine to make up a District Municipality (DMs). Rural areas straddle almost all these LMs and DMs. Typically, each LM has one or two relatively strong towns (although they may be fairly small, and they may vary widely in size), while each DM has one or two relatively major urban hubs. Some of these categories straddle the "urban" and "rural" categories. Formal small towns are sometimes referred to as "urban", and sometimes as "rural towns". Rural dense settlements are, in some senses, urban (referring to population density), but in other senses, rural (they lack an urban economic core, and are often strongly linked with the surrounding villages and farms). Therefore, operational definitions of rural in research on crime and criminal justice have taken several basic approaches. These include measurements by intuition, by demographic conditions, by occupational characteristics, by composite measures, and by self-ratings. The most common approach is not to explicitly define rural at all, but to rely on common intuitive understandings of the term. This presumes that the meaning of rural is so familiar and widely shared that it requires no specification or elaboration (U.S. Department of Justice, 1995: 10). Against this background, for the purpose of this study, former homelands, are considered rural areas. Therefore, the two villages where this study was conducted, namely Malamulele and Saselemani, are still considered 'rural'. These areas often lack job opportunities within their towns, as they do not attract business investment – being situated far from markets and sophisticated banking or telecommunications services. They retain their primary functions of dormitory services and "reproduction of labour power", where children are raised and educated. These areas are also an important staging post for rural people migrating to more vibrant economic areas. Thus, crime and police practices vary from one community to another; that is, province to province as well as from city to city in South Africa. The study of rural crime and rural police practices in Limpopo Province can provide insight into police behaviour in different communities. Many of the studies regarding police practices have been conducted in urban areas in South Africa (Mabasa, 2016; Masogo, 2015). A couple of studies based on community policing have been undertaken in South Africa; however, scanning through the literature review provided no empirical evidence as to whether similar studies had already been conducted addressing the implementation of the CPFs in the rural or remote areas in South Africa, specifically in the Malamulele and Saselamani policing area.

Research related to rural policing practices and how the police respond to crime is limited. However, emerging trends in criminality indicate that amongst others; rape of women and young children, homicide, house-breaking, distribution and possession of illicit substances, theft and possession of stolen goods, cable theft, livestock theft, robbery, public drinking, in rural areas (Clack & Minnaar, 2018; Malatji, 2016; Mamosebo, 2015; Muhammad, 2002; Shikwambana & Mofokeng, 2016). Mofokeng and Ramakgokgoa

(2016), also report about forced displacement of business community caused by crime syndicates in the rural areas of Limpopo Province. The results of the study also established that lack of a special police unit for community policing is a challenge to the implementation of community policing (Mofokeng & Ramakgokgoa, 2016). South African Law uses the term '*crime syndicate*' instead of organised criminal group (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2020). It can safely be argued that rural communities differ from urban communities regarding police practices and crime. In these areas, officers often work on their own in vast geographic areas with limited numbers of human and logistical resources. The authors of this article argue that either the SAPS members or the community members in the rural or remote areas do not yet understand the legislation demanding the establishment of CPFs; therefore, for this reason, this study was conducted to close the gap. The lack of understanding of the operational policies by the SAPS officials and the key role players towards reduction of crime, might lead to role conflict. The degree of participation and the willingness to assist the local police in maintaining public order depends to a large extent on the public's attitude towards the police and vice versa.

Literature review

Community policing originated from the realisation that police will not be able to reduce the levels of crime on their own as they can barely deal with the symptoms of crime and that community involvement is a necessity if the underlying causes of crime are to be removed (Mutune, 2016; Senamolela, 2017). Participation of members of the community in policing is critical in ensuring that policing becomes a people-oriented process. This will go a long way to ensuring that a shift in the policing environment, from a police force to a police service, underpinned by involvement of community members in policing activities, is realised throughout South Africa (Nkwenyane, 2015: v). A major objective of CPF is to establish an active partnership between the police and the community through which crime, service delivery and police-community relations can jointly be analysed and appropriate solutions designed and implemented. This, however, requires that the police should consciously strive to create an atmosphere in which potential community partners are willing and able to cooperate with the police. The new vision of policing was introduced by setting up CPFs at police stations throughout the country. The implementation of community policing, through CPF, has brought to bear the complexity, dynamics of social and political relationships at both provincial and local levels (Malatji, 2016: 2). In essence, it mandates that the police integrate into society and work with the community. Despite these efforts of integrating the police into society to ensure successful co-operation with the community, a number of obstacles are still hampering the successful implementation of CPFs. According to the Limpopo Employment Growth and Development Plan (LEGDP 2009-2014 DOCUMENT (3), 2009–2014: 67), most CPFs do not have the capacity to carry out their functions. Furthermore, the fact that CPFs are most often reliant on the SAPS for logistics, defeats the aim of their function of playing an oversight role at a local level. Mamosebo (2015) concurs that historically, in most parts of South Africa, including rural areas, there was a considerable lack of co-operation between the police and the community, lack of mutual trust between police and communities. Ngoveni (2020) indicates that strong relationships

of mutual trust between police and the communities are critical to maintaining public safety and effective policing. Police officials rely on the cooperation of community members to provide information about crime in their neighbourhoods, and to work with the police to devise solutions to crime and disorder problems. Similarly, community members' willingness to trust the police depends on whether they believe that police actions reflect community values and incorporate the principles of procedural justice and legitimacy. Due to this legacy, interim committees such as street committees, self-defence units and self-protection units were established before 1994, as alternatives to the SAPS. On the other hand, the National Peace-keeping Forces were launched as an official structure, to assist the police in addressing crime problems. These interim committees did not operate for long as most of their members had ulterior motives ranging from monetary benefits to political opportunism. The police did not know how to involve members of the community in policing matters. Under these circumstances, it became necessary for the establishment of CPFs.

The CPF concept has become an accepted component of the SAPS throughout South Africa. However, because the concept of community policing is subject to differing interpretations, it is important, for the purpose of this article, to specify what the concept means and to apply accepted criteria in evaluating whether a purported CPF does in fact yield expected results. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study was to assess the CPF of a rural area in the Malamulele and Saselamani policing area and to determine the extent to which both the police officials and community members understood and practiced actual community policing. The results of this study will be useful in giving the local police an independent evaluation of the department's CPFs to better equip the SAPS in fulfilling its mission. Beyond that, this study will help other law enforcement agencies elsewhere to assess their community policing programmes and improve their ability to serve the citizens in their jurisdiction. To ensure that the SAPS does not get distracted from their mandate, Adams (2010: 4) points out that the common purpose of the SAPS is detailed in the SAPS Act, 1995 (Act No. 68 of 1995) as amended by the SAPS Amendment Act, 2008 (Act No. 57 of 2008). The Act prescribes the roles of the organisation, which are to ensure the safety and security of all persons and property in the national territory, uphold and safeguard the fundamental rights of every person, ensure co-operation between the SAPS and the communities it serves in the combating of crime, reflect respect for victims of crime and an understanding of their needs and ensure effective civilian supervision over the service (Adams, 2010: 4).

Research methodology

For this study, the research paradigm was rooted in positivism. Consequently, a quantitative approach was adopted following a cross-sectional design was employed. The data-gathering instrument was a paper-based, self-administered structured questionnaire, which included a standardised measuring instrument using a five-point Likert scale. Three fieldworkers distributed 560 questionnaires between the two police stations in the Collins Chabane Municipality. This municipality has two police stations serving many villages including Saselemani and Malamulele. Respondents in the survey were asked to state their level of agreement with those given statements, as discussed below from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The data collected was analysed by coding and was computerised.

Answers within the questionnaire were assigned numerical codes and entered into Microsoft Excel. The codes from Excel were subsequently transported into the Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Field, 2013; International Business Machines Corporation (IBM), [sa]; SPSS, [sa]) for coding and further analysis (McCormick, Salcedo & Poh, 2015:12). The quality of the data was ensured through demonstrating validity and reliability. Validity refers to the extent to which the empirical measure reflects accurately the variable that it claims to be measuring (Andrade A structured questionnaire was used to survey the respondents. Ethical considerations are an important aspect of any research, especially research that deals with human participants. Hence, all research requires ethical clearance and approval in order to be conducted. For the purposes of this study, ethical clearance was granted by the university, initially on the condition that the SAPS approved the request to conduct research. This was later changed to full ethical clearance following the approval of the research request by the SAPS. In agreement with the pre-selected police stations, permission was requested and granted by the Limpopo Provincial Office, in accordance with the National Instruction of 2006. The Limpopo Provincial Office communicated with the selected police stations to provide the lead researcher with contact details and allow the researcher to continue with the research. The sample unit are those police officials who work within the SAPS Malamulele and Saselamani policing areas and were aware of the CPFs activities and to what extent this concept applied to their respective policing areas, or even more, influence crime prevention in particular, towards the attainment of organisational goals.

Research findings and discussion

Awareness of community policing is crucial for the CPFs to succeed. For the purpose of this paper, the below statements were formulated with the intention to explore how broad the police and community members' awareness of the CPF is and how deep the public's understanding of community policing is, in general. Statements 1 to 10 of the questionnaire provided valuable information about the awareness of community policing as well as partnerships, which include its existence and to what extent have CPFs programmes been publicised and supported. The following discussion focuses on how each of these statements is understood in the community policing context and raises key questions about their effective implementation.

Statement 1: I know what community policing is

Statement 1 was drawn up to verify if both the community and the police officials knew the concept of community policing. The intention of the authors was to establish whether the police officials as well as the communities were aware of this policing style or approach. In addition, it enabled the authors to study the responses further and their level of understanding about community policing. The legislative framework such as the SAPS Act and policy frameworks such as the NCPS guided the process of establishing their understanding of CPFs. The SAPS Act 68 of 1995 provides for CPFs and other related matters. According to the Act, the police are required to explain to role players what CP entails. Similarly, the NCPS provides a framework for a multi-dimensional approach to crime prevention. It also defines community policing. The NCPS provides a means by which the SAPS and other government departments, the private sector and NGOs can

integrate their approaches to community policing. In addition, the police are required in terms of the South African Constitution to establish CP, and the philosophy is defined in the Constitution. Responses to Statement 1 revealed that a majority of respondents from Malamulele (68.6%) and Saselamani (61.7%) agreed to the statement that they know what community policing is. Thirty four percent (34.0%) of respondents from Saselamani significantly disagreed with the statement, compared with twenty five percent (24.8%) of respondents in Malamulele who disagreed with the statement. Seven percent (n= 15: 6.6%) of respondents from Malamulele and four percent (n=4: 6.9%) from Saselamani indicated that they were not sure about this statement. From the above responses, the slight difference in agreement between Malamulele and Saselamani may indicate that the respondents from both police stations were adequately informed about the goals of community policing, which are to reduce crime and disorder, promote citizens' quality of life in communities, reduce fear of crime and improve police community relations. In expressing their agreement or disagreement of whether they know what community policing is, as highlighted above, majority of respondents, seem to be 'aware' and or clear about the theoretical aspects of community policing. As highlighted in Statements 3 and 6 below, respondents indicated that regarding awareness of the CPFs existence within their policing areas and CPF has received enough publicity in their area respectively. For respondents, community policing means that the police and the community should establish a partnership. Dlamini (2020:6) argues that "...the level of understanding of what community policing entails depends on how actively involved participants are in this type of partnership". From the responses provided by the respondents, it seems that the goals of the community policing were communicated and achieved through three essential efforts, namely community engagement, problem solving and organisational transformation. The findings of this study were in agreement with that of Nkwenyane (2015: 33) whose study was conducted in the rural areas of Mpumalanga province. The findings regarding awareness indicated that while public awareness for members of the public to participate in the CPF has been done, the results drawn from the study indicate that this has not covered everyone amongst the targeted participants of the CPFs drawn from the public. This reflects on the extent that such public awareness campaigns are able to reach the entire population targeted for participation in the CPF.

Statement 2: Community police partnership does minimise levels of crime in my area

This statement was aimed to determine if the respondents were engaged in an effective crime prevention initiative with the Malamulele and Saselamani policing area. The researcher wanted to know how much respondents trusted each other, worked in cooperation, and developed partnerships with both the local police and the community and other role-players such as faith-based organisations and schools. The level of agreement or disagreement would determine the ability or lack thereof, of a rural community to engage in an effective crime prevention initiative. Responding to this statement, the majority of the respondents (79.9%) from the SAPS agreed whereas (50.9%) of the respondents from the community agreed. Based on this finding, the researcher suggests that local police should take a more proactive role in engaging communities to prevent crime in their community. Specifically, rural police should collaborate with local residents on crime prevention programmes such as local soccer matches and cultural

activities and encourage local rural community members to actively participate in the CPFs in order to reduce the risk of crime related incidents. The budget speech by the then Member of the Executive Council (MEC), Ms Dikeledi Magadzi (2011) for the 2010/2011 financial year, emphasised the need for the effective implementation of local crime prevention strategies, especially at the rural areas. The interesting part of the budget speech was her desire to see the fast tracking of CPFs throughout the province. According to the MEC, the CSFs “will play a major role in the mobilisation and implementation of a structured multi-agency approach” in crime prevention efforts. It can be deduced from this approach that the MEC had lost faith in CPFs and SCFs as the CSFs were to take on most of the roles held previously by the CPFs. It is the opinion of the authors that the CPFs and SCFs have largely not succeeded in mobilising the broader societal structures in the fight against crime.

The findings of the study by Mofokeng and Ramakgokgoa (2016), conducted in Ritavi, one of the rural areas of Limpopo Province. The goal of the study was to determine the prevalence of commercial crime and, extent of the collaboration between the relevant stakeholders to respond to this challenge. The authors interviewed participants from three focus groups represented by Focus Group 1 – constituted by business against crime [BAC] representatives, and local business community around Ritavi policing area. Focus Group 2 – comprised of SAPS members from the local police stations including Commercial Crime Unit (CCU) within Limpopo Province as well as Focus Group 3 – constituted of community members and CPFs leaders. The findings of the study by Mofokeng and Ramakgokgoa (2016); amongst others, highlight that; in spite of the existence of CPFs in the rural areas of Limpopo, participants identified a wide range of problems. Findings indicate that amongst others; crime syndicates commit various crimes such as; production of false identity documents, purchasing and utilisation of skimming machines; card readers, card encoders, card printers and over-laminates used to produce cloned credit cards, identity theft, phishing, account compromise and credit card fraud, which are often committed against Ritavi and Limpopo communities. It would also seems as if many items facilitating the commission of fraudulent activities such as the production of false identity documents, purchasing of skimming machines are widely available on the Internet, including card readers, card encoders, card printers and over-laminates used to produce cloned credit cards.

The common denominator, according to Mofokeng and and Ramakgokgoa (2016), is that relevant stakeholders do not share information regarding criminality and victimisation in the Limpopo Province. The lack of dissemination of information regarding crime and victimisation can be attributed to two things. Firstly, there is a perceived lack of trust amongst the law enforcement agencies and specialist units, due to perceived egregious act of misconduct by some of the SAPS members colluding with crime syndicates. Secondly, similarly community members’ willingness to trust the police depends on whether they believe that police actions reflect community values and incorporate the principles of procedural justice and legitimacy. Community structures may take a variety of forms in rural areas, ranging from civic organisations focused on development issues, small self-employment initiatives, self-policing groups or the more formal CPFs. These CPFs were to be established at all police stations primarily as a means of ensuring greater communication and co-operation between the police and those whom they served

(Institute for Security Studies [ISS], 2000). However, CPFs do not guarantee adequate response to crime in the rural areas, if the relevant stakeholders do not trust and challenges the legitimacy of the local police. Controversial uses of force and other incidents can damage relationships between police and their communities. Mofokeng and Ramakgokgoa (2016) further report that, a variety of unreformed police strategies and tactics have contributed to mistrust of police in rural communities. Poor performance by the local police to convict apprehended criminal suspects, failure by the police linking of new commercial crime modus operandi activities with those already reported, securing evidence at crime scenes [...] as well as perceived lack of collaboration with local SAPS and community members, damage relationships between police and their communities. One focus group indicated that some of the reasons for a perceived lack of collaboration are; the history of strained relations between specialist units and local uniform branch for competing over policing resources, corruptive practices by the SAPS members. Improved stakeholders engagement was not made an official prerequisite or a priority, i.e. crime prevention initiatives were left to local police and to some extent relegated to visible policing and CPFs, often considered as an inferior level of activities, were considered by some local police members as insignificant. Thus, CPFs functionality and operations, not regarded as having the same weight like real police work, such as investigation of commercial crime cases. To drive the point home, one participant responded:

“...It seems as if our law enforcement agencies resemble house divided on the issue of information sharing, do you then expect others to bring their side to fight crime? To win this war against criminal networks, crime analysis at station level and criminal intelligence will need to be merged to create a more functional structure that would really crack the criminal environment, and greater information sharing is essential from all parties. It remains to be seen if certain sectors of the police resistance to sharing information, especially if from confidential sources, can be overcome to help fulfill this holistic objective” (Focus Group 1 – BAC) (Mofokeng & Ramakgokgoa, 2016:).

Police in Limpopo Province, should acknowledge the birth and history of policing in South Africa, officially established in January 1995, bringing together the apartheid era South African Police (SAP) and the police forces of the former homelands. It was a difficult birth, bringing together a number of different police forces, who all had different training standards, approaches and attitudes to human rights, distorted views regarding partnerships with the local communities, racism, discrimination and the use of force. Therefore, in the same vein, it is essential that the two police stations in the Malamulele and Saselemani, cultivate strong relationships of mutual trust with the communities they serve. This is critical in maintaining public safety and effective policing. Police officials rely on the cooperation of community members to provide information about crime and victimisation, and to work with the communities to devise solutions to crime and disorder problems. As highlighted earlier, similarly community members’ willingness to trust the police depends on whether they believe that police actions reflect community values and incorporate the principles of procedural justice and legitimacy.

Statement 3: I am aware of the existence of the CPF in my area

All the respondents 159 (100%) from the SAPS agreed that they are aware of the existence of the CPF in their area compared with 63.6 percent of community respondents

who disagreed. Thirty six percent (36.4%) of the respondents from the community agreed with this statement. Again, police respondents present a positive picture regarding awareness of the CPFs existence within their policing areas. In this regard, there is no difference between this finding in this statement and Statement 1. Nevertheless, the study revealed a bit of contradiction between the views of local police and those of the community members regarding the awareness of existence of the CPF in their areas. Based on the responses provided by the community members, it is evident that awareness for community members at the grassroots level about the existence of CPFs in their area has not been adequately conducted. The fact that merely thirty six percent (36.4%) of the respondents from the community agreed with the statement has serious implications to the addressing of crime-related problems in these two stations. This can be explained by the fact that the majority of community members do not know what community policing is. As a result, this majority group are not up-to-date concerning the existence of community policing programmes such as CPFs happening around their areas. According to the authors, this increases the need for public awareness in policing initiatives. The reason behind lack of public awareness about CPFs may be due to lack of community mobilisation by the SAPS in the rural areas of Malamulele and Saselamani policing areas. It has been observed that some villagers in these areas do not value CPFs as they are of the view that it is a waste of time. They might be ignorant about their roles to reduce crime due to lack of interest to attend public meetings in order to be empowered about CPFs. Crime prevention, according to Burger (2007:42), should not be primarily the sole responsibility of the police as a single role player, but should involve other role players, including the community members. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each and every citizen to have respect for the police and get involved and be committed in community policing programmes such as CPFs and become the 'eyes and ears' of the SAPS.

Statement 4: We have an active CPF in our area

The overwhelming majority (95.0%) of the respondents from the SAPS agreed with the statement that they have active CPFs in their policing area. Only five percent (5.0%) did not agree with the statement. Responses from the community members indicated that sixty one percent (60.7%) disagreed whereas thirty nine percent (39.3%) agreed. The findings, like previous statements, indicated significant differences on the responses between the police officials and community members. Though there is a significant difference between the responses given by the community and the police, the responses by both groups (police and the community members) presented conflicting views concerning the activeness of their CPFs in Malamulele and Saselamani policing areas. The fact that 60.7% of respondents from the community agreed with the statement might be due to the fact that these respondents had little knowledge about CPFs and were likely not to be part of the CPFs. This group of community members do not take responsibility for crime prevention in their own neighbourhoods but solely depend on the local police to address crime prevention. According to Maroga (2016a), community participation in the implementation takes place through Sector Crime Forums (SCFs) and CPFs should mobilise stakeholders. The authors are of the view that members of the community, community-based organisations (CBOs), NGOs and the SAPS in each locality should adopt an integrated approach in the fight against crime. Maroga (2016b) further argues

that interested groups in the form of community-based structures must be invited and should become active participants within demarcated sectors. Burger (2006:4) states that constant police availability and visibility using marked vehicles, SAPS members in uniform and conducting targeted and sustainable patrols should be a standard practice. The authors are of the opinion that the strategic objectives of CPFs are to ensure safer communities and neighbourhoods through police visibility, a speedy police response to crime-related complaints and community education through sustainable crime awareness campaigns. Thus, the CPFs can only be active and successful if the members of the community are actively partaking and playing their role effectively within the CPFs. Therefore, community members should be partakers not observers who end up putting the blame on the police for every problem they encounter within their communities.

Statement 5: The CPF in my area add value to the quality of life

The responses to this statement indicated that that an overwhelming majority (96.2%) from the SAPS officials agreed; whereas, 0.6 percent neither agreed nor disagreed and 3.2 percent disagreed. On the other hand, 62.9 percent of the respondents from the community disagreed, whereas 37.2 percent agreed with the same statement. The responses to this statement show that there is a correlation in terms of agreement from the respondents with the previous statement (Statement 4). Even though there is a significant difference between the responses from the SAPS and that of the community, what is discouraging is that only the SAPS officials and not the local community members were optimistic that the existence of the CPF in their policing area offers a sense of security and thus adds value to the quality of life. Based on these findings, the authors are of the opinion that a CPF can only be effective if it is active and that a CPF can only add value to the quality of community member's lives when there is active involvement by both the police and the public. The findings indicated that, to a certain extent, the community does not have much faith in the value of CPFs. ISS (2000) surveyed 756 inhabitants of 40 predominantly African rural settlements from the six out of nine provinces in South Africa. Of these respondents, 56.9% were victims of at least one crime between July 1993 and July 1998.

The findings from this survey also indicate that while crime in the rural areas is commonly thought to be less extensive than in the more developed urban areas, findings indicate that people living in rural areas are victimised at rates similar to those of their urban counterparts. While the overall chances of becoming a victim may be similar, the impact of victimisation may be more severe in rural areas. Without access to social services and other support, the rural poor are the least able to deal with the impact of crime. However, the potential does exist for individual and community-based activities to reduce crime. Wide ranges of interventions were suggested by respondents in response to the question about what they could do to make their area safer. In addition, the overwhelming majority (80%) of the 54 respondents who said that their community made alternative 'arrangements' to protect itself, believed that these measures were effective in securing the community, CPFs, however, had less success: only 42% said their local CPF had made a difference to crime in their area (ISS, 2000). Therefore, interventions aimed at enhancing the safety of people living in the deep rural areas should focus on improving policing rather than on developing the complex participatory, multiagency social crime

prevention programmes, which are either being implemented in, or planned for some of South Africa's urban areas. The critical resources and capacity for these kinds of programmes either do not exist, or are underdeveloped in the rural areas. Interventions focused on enhancing policing are thus most likely to have the greatest impact in the short to medium term. Furthermore, improved policing is the most preferred intervention of people living in these areas. The limited police presence and infrastructural constraints mean that most of the interaction between the police and those whom they serve, occur at the police station when assistance is sought. Thus, policing in these areas is predominantly reactive and interventions should therefore focus on improving services delivered at the community safety centre (or police stations), as well as intelligence and detective functions (ISS, 2000). It is the opinion of the authors that the CPFs have largely not succeeded in mobilising the broader societal structures in the fight against crime. According to a strategic document developed by the SAPS entitled "Approaches to crime prevention" (2005a:5), the prevention of crime requires many and varying stakeholders and the setting up of partnerships with a range of stakeholders is the key to crime reduction in society. Furthermore, partnerships should create a sizeable pool of the resources and skills of all relevant role players.

One of the main objectives of community policing is to establish a partnership between the police and the community they serve to ensure effective protection of communities and better quality of life. The National Development Plan-Vision for 2030 (NPC, 2011:21-22), drafted by the National Planning Commission (NPC), states that when a community feels unsafe it is difficult for them to develop their capabilities and participate in social activities. To rectify this, there is a need for communities to gain confidence in the criminal justice system. This same development plan consists of a proposal for the adoption of an integrated approach aimed at tackling the causes of crime and for this purpose, there is a need for a concerted effort to mobilise state and community resources in the fight against crime. The plan further proposes the building of community participation through safety programmes within which civil society organisations and civic participation are recognised as critical elements of a safe and secure society. The authors are of the view that the National Development Plan is currently steering the national agenda in the right direction in as far as the fight against crime is concerned (NPC, 2011). The responses for Statement 4 paint a disturbing picture that the respondents in the areas of Malamulele and Saselamani communities are of the view that the CPFs in their areas did not add value to the quality of their lives.

Statement 6: The CPF has received enough publicity in my area

In this statement, it is shown that 81.7 percent of the respondents from the SAPS agreed with the statement, whilst 16.9 percent disagreed and 1.9 percent were undecided. On the other hand, in responding to this statement, the majority of the respondents (71.4%) disagreed, whereas 21.4 percent agreed with the statement. The significant difference between the SAPS and community members regarding the publicity of the CPF paints a bleak picture. The CPF represents a departure from past practices where the police were seen as solely responsible for maintenance of law and order in the community and is expected to play a vital educational function. Rather than simply asking the public to be the 'eyes and ears' of the police, CPF calls for communities' active involvement in

problem solving and in helping to set police priorities. CPF meetings are supposed to serve as a locus for finding solutions to problems and for involving active participants in problem-solving forums, not just as a place to register complaints. Thus, communities need not only to attend meetings but also to understand their role in problem-solving policing. Clack and Minnaar (2018) point out that the while CPFs have had some successes in improving police-community co-operation, especially in urban areas, overall in rural areas they have had limited success. This apathy towards CPFs in rural areas must, however, also be seen within the unique rural constraints of community participation in many of these structures ranging from long distances, too frequent meetings and prioritisation of other farming matters of more concern to farmers (e.g. lack of co-ordinated action against stock thieves). Accordingly, the new safety and security strategy for rural areas was to be based on the following six pillars:

1. adopting a proactive and reactive responsive operational approach;
2. enhanced co-operation and co-ordination between all role players;
3. community safety awareness;
4. rural development;
5. effective communication; and
6. effective investigation and prosecution (SAPS, 2011 cited in Clack & Minnaar, 2018:127).

In an analysis of the new strategy, Boshoff (2010 in Clack & Minnaar, 2018: 127) mentions the following: “It is unfortunate that the strategy is based on plans that have failed in the past, not because of the strategy, but because of the inability of the SAPS to implement it and a lack of resources.” In addition, “Sector Policing often does not go any further than phase two: the identification of the sectors. The moment phase three is implemented, namely the allocation of resources, personnel and equipment, the strategy ends because of a lack of resources” (Boshoff, 2010 in Clack & Minnaar, 2018: 127). According to Boshoff (2010 in Clack & Minnaar, 2018: 127), the main challenge to ensure that the new strategy worked was the need for two crucial capabilities, namely: house-and-hearth protection and an area-bound dedicated reaction force (such as was provided by actively functioning local commandos). Although the strategy mentions ‘house-and-heart’ protection (i.e. security and safety awareness initiatives), it does not empower the farmers (or, as per the new strategy, the rural inhabitants) with the means, knowledge and ability to protect themselves. This includes radio communication, issuing and providing individual members of the public with firearms for self-defence (as the commandos provided to its members), or a communication link to a dedicated reaction force. A budget to implement and operate functional CPF’s is vital. The current “self-funded” model is not sustainable in the financial climate. Urgent attention by government agencies to allocate CPF funding should be considered (Greeff, 2012).

The aims of Statements 1, 3 and 6, were to determine whether respondents, adequately informed about the existence and functionality of CPFs. Responses for Statement 6, as indicated above, show that, the majority of respondents (81.7%) from the SAPS, agreed as compared with the (71.4%) from the community who disagreed. “Measuring awareness or knowledge of issues creates challenges. To start with, the term awareness is less than clear. To be aware means to know, to realise or interested in

knowing about something, or, to know that something is important... Awareness measurement has the object of what respondents know as well as what they do not know. It can either be tests of maximum performance or the tests of typical performance” (Gafoor, 2012:2). Traditionally the concept of awareness is used in the research field of Computer Supported Collaborative Work (CSCW) to re-establish conditions of face-to-face situations in the online realm, with visual cues showing, for example, who is online or working on a document (Reinhardt, Mletzko, Sloep & Drachsler, 2012:17). Research on awareness support in the CSCW context has often been directly related to the direct improvement of cooperative practices and measurable task performance improvements. Research shows that the availability of awareness support improves the effectiveness of how information is spread in communities (Loevstrandin, 1991 in Reinhardt et al., 2012:17) and positively influences social interactions taking place in those communities (Goldstein, 2006 in Reinhardt et al., 2012:17).

Gafoor (2012:2) point out that “awareness in general means, knowledgeable being conscious; cognizant, informed alert. Awareness is the state or ability to perceive, to feel, or to be conscious of events, objects, or sensory patterns. In this level of consciousness, sense data can be confirmed by an observer without necessarily implying understanding. The possessor of any knowledge must contain awareness but mere awareness does not contain any type of knowledge. More broadly, it is the state or quality of being aware of something”. For the purpose of this paper, awareness can be referred to as *awareness about CPFs in the study area*. “Awareness may also refer to public or common knowledge or understanding about a social, scientific, or political issue multicultural awareness. To say a person “has greater awareness”, it can mean they have greater knowledge of such subjects” (Gafoor, 2012:2). Here awareness may refer to public or common knowledge or understanding about CPFs. However, making communities aware about the existence of CPFs, is different from the effective implementation of CPFs in rural areas. What are the practical implications on the ground? Boshoff (2010 in Clack & Minnaar, 2018: 127) argues that in both rural and urban areas, the public have tended to accept and come to terms with the fact that the police simply do not have the capacity or the capabilities to implement, operate and resource sector policing adequately. Thus, it appears as though little actual implementation has occurred since the publication in 1995 of the *South African Police Service Act*, the 1997 department of safety and security’s *Community policing policy and guidelines*, or the government’s *Rural development framework* which noted that, while many CPFs in the urban areas had already become effective in breaking down distrust and ensuring wider participation, “CPF’s are not widely established in the rural areas” (ISS, 2000:np). It can be safely argued that, the local police might have adequately informed local communities, about crime and to encourage them to join hands with the local police and their local community forums in the fight against crime. This could have done through various platforms, such social media, distribution of pamphlets, local radio stations and visitations to local faith based organisations and schools with safety tips to prevent crime.

However, diverse views between the SAPS officials and the community members could also indicate that inadequate resources by the SAPS to implement and support the functioning of CPFs, and a lack of trust by the community. Lack of trust frequently undermines efforts to bring communities into policing activities, despite the fact that

communities were adequately informed, and have knowledge about the role of both the police and the community (Statements 7, 8 and 9) as well remain well placed to make a very significant effort in closing the capacity constraints and limitations of the SAPS. Community policing is a holistic concept with two core pillars: inclusion of community members in policing activities, and a new respect for human rights and care for community members. The SAPS should commit to allocate budget, infrastructure, as well as personnel towards implementation of the CPFs. De Witt Dippenaar (2018: 4), highlighting the work of Sir Robert Peel, argue that the police are the public and the public are the police and it is of paramount importance that every policing style or programme of community policing be marketed and reach the entire community as community policing involves both the police and the public. According to the authors' observations, in most rural areas of Malamulele and Saselamani policing area, the majority of community members at the grassroots level do have full and accurate information about the CPFs. However, they do not have much faith about the CPFs.

Statement 7: There are awareness campaigns about CPF in my area

Regarding this statement, the majority of the respondents (87.4%) agreed to the statement, ten percent (10.0%) disagreed, whereas two percent (2.5%) were undecided. The majority of respondents (66.7%) from the community disagreed compared with forty three percent (43.3%) who agreed with the statement. Public awareness of the CPF is vital in order for the programme to succeed. This statement was aimed at testing the views of the respondents regarding their level of agreement or disagreement whether the SAPS had done enough to raise public awareness of the CPFs and if all the respondents were aware of the CPFs and its aims. Based on responses from Statement 7, it is clear to the authors that awareness campaigns about CPFs in some rural areas of Limpopo have not yet covered everyone (especially the general community members/public). This finding may very well validate the responses for Statement 6 (The CPF has received enough publicity in my area). The interpretation by the authors is that there seems to be a limitation with regard to adequate marketing or awareness strategies from the SAPS. This is indicative of the disagreement responses by the community regarding the publicity or awareness of the CPFs to the members of the public.

This may also indicate the limited ability of the CPFs to make their actual activities and functions known to the members of the public. The implications based on the findings are that there could be a substantial number of community members that are not aware of the existence of CPFs and generally do not know what the concept of CPF stands for. The findings clearly indicated that there is a lack of understanding of the CPFs amongst the public but this could be for a variety of reasons, such as not enough publicity or that the programme is still in its infancy in the Limpopo province. The implications for the SAPS are that it is essential for the local police to recognise that a wide variety of sources should be utilised to raise awareness of CPFs within communities, such as visiting local schools and faith-based organisations. Some of the barriers that were analysed through the findings that could be one of the hindrances towards effective awareness campaigns could be the knowledge of the use of the information technology such as the Internet by both the local police and the community. The authors are aware that the utilisation of information technology by the local communities in the form of internet cafes to access government

services was still a challenge. Many community members do not have internet access and may be missing out on vital information that is now publicised online instead of the traditional newsletters or newspapers.

This point is emphasised by the findings indicating that not enough information comes through either by newspapers or other forms of media and the respondents from the communities of Malamulele and Saselamani felt they rarely hear from the police. The findings also suggested that there is not enough information accessible to communities and they know very little about policing in the area. The National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) holds a proposal, which can be interpreted as a move away from the provisions of section 205(3) of the Constitution (South Africa, 1996) in as far as the mandate relating to crime prevention is concerned (DOSS, 1996). The strategy propagates for public education and awareness campaigns intended to ensure community participation in crime prevention. The NCPS seeks to encourage communities to assume the responsibility of crime prevention in the form of neighbourhood watch, information sharing and joint problem identification and solving. Unlike the Constitution, the NCPS does not place the crime prevention responsibility on the police alone but rather confers a shared responsibility where the community takes the lead (DOSS, 1996). Newham and Maroga (2016:10) are of the opinion that promoting a positive police culture, strengthening accountability and engaging communities will build a professional police service with integrity and legitimacy. A police service based on acceptable values will be better placed to respond positively to the needs of the communities whose values they emulate and serve. The SAPS 6 that is accepted in the community will be able to cope with everyday challenges and improve service delivery. The National Rural Safety Strategy (NRSS) (DOSS, 2011:20) proposes what appears at face value to be a much more pragmatic approach to rural policing as opposed to merely holding CPF or SCF meetings to share information given to the SAPS. In this strategy, the notion of community patrollers becomes part of Sector Policing as community member's patrol identified hotspots under the guidance of a sector commander (Baloyi, 2016:23).

Statement 8: I understand the role of the police in the CPFs

This statement aimed to determine if the respondents understand about each other's roles and powers. The CPFs awareness campaigns do not include any of the details about the local police and communities' expertise, so the community, unless they have had a reason to have had contact with the local police, are unaware of their roles, powers and responsibilities. Based on the findings, an overwhelming majority of the respondents (100.0%) from the SAPS agreed, whereas sixty six percent (66.4%) of the respondents from the community also agreed with the statement. Thirty four percent (33.6%) of the respondents from the community disagreed. The respondents from the community were of the view there were no clear distinctions between their roles and that of the SAPS, therefore, making it difficult for the public to participate in collaboration with the local police to reduce crime. This can be elaborated further that the respondents from the local communities might have believed that the lack of awareness on the CPFs or the lack of the effective implementation thereof in particular was an indication that the local police were not very friendly towards the community. However, it is encouraging to observe that despite the fact that the respondents from the community indicated that they were

not in agreement with statement 6 (The CPF has received enough publicity in my area) as well as Statement 7 (There are awareness campaigns about CPF in my area), the responses for Statement 8 are indeed encouraging. However, the responses by thirty four percent (33.6%) of the respondents from the community should be addressed, no matter how small the number was. Based on authors' observations during some of the service delivery protests at one of the villages surrounding Malamulele, there was some confusion among community members about the role of the police in relation to service delivery protestation in general. The conversations by some of the community members indicated that public awareness regarding the role of the police and the community was a necessity in the Malamulele and Saselamani policing area.

The Strategic Plan 2010-2014 (SAPS, 2009b:8-10) lays the basis for SAPS members and management to establish community-based partnerships in the fight against crime. The Strategic Plan 2010-2014 (SAPS, 2009b) also puts emphasis on the interdepartmental crime reduction initiatives of the justice, crime prevention and security (JCPS) cluster geared at improving the performance of the criminal justice system (CJS). The basis for good relations between the police and the community lies in the ability of the SAPS to meet the needs of the community through effective partnerships and service delivery. CPFs are aimed at bringing the police closer to the community; creating omnipresence through them being available at any given time in all crime hotspots. The communities located in the deep rural areas of the Limpopo province experience challenges in articulating their needs and aspirations due to their ignorance of the law regarding their rights. Sector commanders, sector teams, SCFs and CPFs who are working together at grassroots level should liaise with relevant public sector departments and agencies rather than working alone. An example of where CPFs can play an effective role in the prevention of crime through an integrated approach is with crimes occurring within school premises, such as the prevalence of drugs, possession of dangerous weapons, theft or the vandalising of school property. School principals, teachers, school governing bodies (SGBs) and learners should participate in all efforts of crime prevention or problem-solving.

Statement 9: I understand the role of the community members in the CPF

It is encouraging to observe that all the respondents from both the SAPS and the community agreed to the statement. In comparison with the previous statements, it seems as if the implementation of the CPF was the challenge. It is the view of the authors that the implementation of the CPFs within the communities of Malamulele and Saselamani necessitated fundamental changes in the structure and management of the local police stations. It is essential that all key role players within the communities of Malamulele and Saselamani as well as the local police officials are empowered to realise that the CPF differs from traditional policing in how the community is perceived and in its expanded policing goals. While crime control and prevention remain central priorities for the SAPS, CPFs strategies should be embraced by all relevant role players to address the strategic goals of the SAPS. The local police and the community should become partners in addressing problems of disorder and crime within the communities of Malamulele and Saselamani policing area. As links between the police and the community are strengthened over time, the ensuing partnership will be able to pinpoint and mitigate the underlying causes of

crime better. From the data presented above, there is an indication that both the police and the community members partaking in the CPFs in Malamulele and Saselamani policing areas understand the roles and responsibilities allocated to them. The notion behind the philosophy of community policing is that the police should develop a new relationship with citizens in the community by explaining their role in the community, allowing ordinary citizens to voice their needs and identify community crime problems in order to jointly seek solutions. The community's role is to be responsible for laying charges, making statements, testifying in court and assisting the police with information needed to address crime-related problems experienced within their communities and in the performance of their functions (De Witt Dippenaar. 2018). Muluneh, (2017:5) concurs with the above by indicating that community policing is not a set of specific projects; rather, it involves changing decision-making processes and creating new cultures within police departments. The authors suggest that community engagement is an important part of police work, by developing partnerships with community groups; this enables the police to build relationships with the community.

From these relationships, the police are able to gather information that allows them to use a problem-solving approach when tackling issues in the community. This is another area that Mulleneh (2017) believes relies upon the police being able to work with other agencies in order to be successful. It is, therefore, also the responsibility of the communities within the Malamulele and Saselamani policing area to make their policing concerns known to the police. By so doing, community members will be involving themselves in efforts to improve the quality of life in their communities in the Limpopo province. Response regarding this statement clearly shows that they understand the notion behind the concept community policing. The findings on Statement 9 have a direct bearing on contemporary community policing efforts in the rural areas of Limpopo province. First, by getting to know members of the community, the local police would be able to obtain valuable information about criminal activity and perpetrators. They would also be able to obtain realistic assessments of the needs of community members and their expectations of police services. These findings also exposed the need to re-evaluate the issue of training the SAPS as well as the local communities on the implementation of the CPFs. The findings also pointed to the role, which the Station Commanders should play in facilitating programme planning and implementation. The exclusion of commanders in training and development efforts by the SAPS would ultimately lead to the demise of the CPF programmes in the rural areas of the Limpopo province.

Statement 10: The CPF in my area provides with precautions on how to reduce levels of victimisation

Responses to the above statement indicated that the majority (99.4%) of the respondents from the SAPS agreed, whereas only one percent (0.6%) disagreed with the statement. On the other hand, the majority (54.3%) of the respondents disagreed compared with the forty-six percent (45.7%) of the respondents who agreed with the statement that CPF in their area provides them with safety precautions. Based on responses provided to this statement, it would be safe to assume that community members were of the view that the CPFs did not provide adequate awareness on how to reduce the levels of crime in their neighbourhoods. As police recognise the effectiveness of the problem-

solving approach, there is a growing awareness that community involvement is essential for its success. Determining the underlying causes of crime depends, to a great extent, on an in-depth knowledge of the community. Therefore, community participation in identifying and setting priorities will contribute to effective problem-solving efforts by the community and the local police. Cooperative problem-solving also reinforces trust, facilitates the exchange of information and leads to the identification of other areas that could benefit from the mutual attention of the police and the community. The implications for the SAPS are that it is essential that the local police should provide the local communities with safety precaution regarding possible victimisation in order to minimise the fear of crime, thus improving the quality of life.

The Limpopo Provincial Crime Prevention Strategy (DOSS, 2015:2) states that local crime prevention has been left to CPFs, which are supposed to engage in joint problem identification and participatory problem-solving with the SAPS. According to the strategy (DOSS, 2011:6), mayors and local public officials in the United States of America have realised safety of communities is a basic human right and it is an important element to quality of life for communities. As a result, they have mobilised local partnerships with key stakeholders including the police, government agencies, community organisations and residents in order to establish safer, secure and vibrant communities. The Draft White Paper on Safety and Security (DOSS, 2012:34) formally seeks to establish Community Safety Forums (CSFs), which do not aim to replace or duplicate any existing structure or forum at local level. The purpose of establishing CSFs is to create a comprehensive coordinating mechanism of all activities and all role-players with regard to the safety of communities at local government levels. The aims of the CSFs include ensuring integrated service delivery, multi-agency collaboration and community participation along with a commitment to the sharing of resources, accountability and partnerships, as propagated by this study.

Conclusion and recommendations

The findings indicated that the local police rated the statements statistically significantly higher than community members, which means that they scored the statements higher and thus statistically significantly agreed more to the statements than the community members. This is a serious concern that should receive urgent attention from the local police. The philosophy of community policing postulates that the community and the police will work together in a concerted effort to solve community problems. The role of a community police officer is that of leader, facilitator, educator and role model. It is the officer's job to work with and for the community to serve its needs based on personal observations and information that emerges from the community. Once the community and police department begin to develop a working relationship, both parties would be able to engage in the process of goal sharing, resulting in a congruent relationship (Trojanowicz & Dixon, 1974:21). Although positive police-community relations alone do not constitute CPFs, they are an important first step in establishing a working relationship with the community. According to proponents of community policing, every officer within the local SAPS should be an efficient and effective public servant by establishing positive police-community relations. SAPS cannot be the only problem solvers and planners in a neighbourhood. An effective CPF requires a grassroots effort of the police

and community working together to form a partnership and provide for a better quality of life. For this to occur, the local police must receive leadership and direction from their local stations.

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