

INCREASING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND SATISFACTION IN POLICING THROUGH A VICTIM-CENTRED APPROACH: A PILOT PROJECT IN KOSOVO

William Brame and Giuseppe Lettieri

The aim of Security Sector Reform (SSR) programmes in developing countries primarily remains to develop accountable security agencies, in line with the principles of the rule of law and governmental oversight, and the respect of international code of conducts and human rights standards. While armed forces and intelligence agencies, more often than not, have no interaction with civilians, this is not the case for policing agencies. Due to the nature of their work, they have daily interaction with civilians. Moreover, the police's work in matters such as investigations, public safety and crime prevention is directly dependent on the nature and status of their daily contact with civilians. Indeed, especially when a community-centred approach is followed, success is often measured by the capacity of police officers to build relations with community members and, conversely, community members being confident in approaching police officers in case of need.

In this sense, citizens' confidence in policing agencies represents a performance indicator of police reliability, trustworthiness and understanding of communities' concerns. Many studies proved that citizens' perceptions of policing agencies directly affect the police's capacity to tackle crime and be aware of major security and safety concerns of local communities. Moreover, cases in which an improved service was provided to different typologies of victims showed positive effects on the overall level of confidence in police work. This becomes particularly true in countries that have experienced conflict, violence and political turmoil, where the police are often associated with the ruling power and those that have committed atrocities and severe violations of human rights.

Following this idea, in 2016 the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK) implemented the pilot project "Confidence and Satisfaction in the Kosovo Police (KP)" with the aim of increasing levels of community members' satisfaction and confidence towards the KP in the municipality of Ferizaj/Uroševac. The project lay under a broader programme of capacity building implemented by different international organisations and found its *raison d'être* in the 2012-2016 Community Policing Strategy and Action Plan. Indeed, the latter specifically referred to the "increasing level of public confidence in the KP," and foresaw additional efforts to roll out similar projects in other Kosovo's areas.

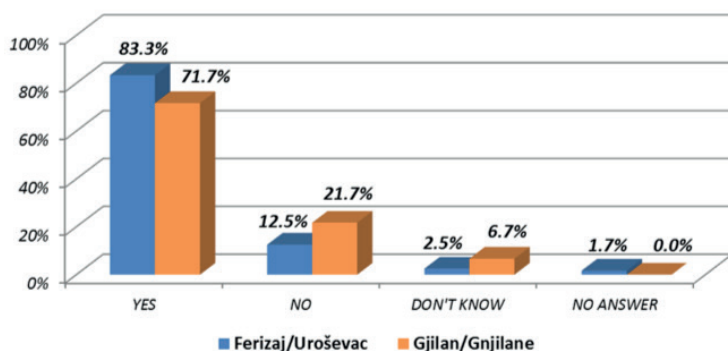
OMiK's project was divided into two separated phases. The first phase relied on a series of workshops and training activities on the key drivers of confidence and the victim-centred approach for KP seniors and junior officers in the KP station of Ferizaj/Uroševac. These efforts were directed to changing the institutional mindset of KP officers in addressing victims and developing standard operations procedures (SOPs) – follow-up calls by KP officers and investigators, visits from community policing officers, etc. – and tools such as victim's card, crime prevention booklets, etc.

The second phase aimed at measuring KP performance and effectiveness of SOPs and tools through a 6-month survey based on a mixed quantitative and qualitative methodology. The police station in Gjilan/Gnjilane was considered a "control site" in order to gauge possible improvements on victims' satisfaction levels against the results collected in Ferizaj/Uroševac. For each location, 120 respondents were interviewed through a semi-structured ques-

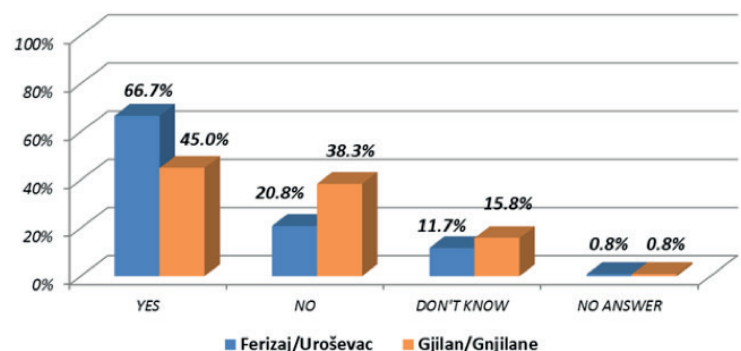
tnote

TORINO
WORLD
AFFAIRS
INSTITUTE

DID THE OFFICER TELL YOU WHAT WOULD BE HAPPENING ABOUT YOUR REPORT?



DID THE OFFICER GIVE YOU PRACTICAL ADVICE ABOUT HOW TO PREVENT BEING A VICTIM IN THE FUTURE?



tionnaire, spanning four different typologies of crime (theft, robbery, traffic accidents and lightly/heavily bodily injury). Three additional questions were added exclusively for the Ferizaj/Uroševac interviewees with regard to the victim package and its content. The respondents were selected from a broader list of victims provided on a weekly basis by the two stations and taking into account, wherever possible, a proper gender and ethnic balance, and the geographic locations of crimes according to the stations' area of responsibility (whether in town or in one of the villages). It is worth mentioning that the number of interviews for each typology of crime was agreed on with the station in Ferizaj/Uroševac, and that both stations have a similar organisational chart and human geography in their area of responsibility.

Kosovo represents a good example of a post-conflict society in which national governmental institutions and security agencies have undertaken a process of democratic reform, especially with regard to the KP. Surveys run by local research centres have shown positive achievements on levels of communities' confidence in the KP. Nevertheless, the OMiK's project showed that better results can be achieved through the adoption of a victim-centred approach.

Drilling down into the statistics, it seems clear that victims from the area of Ferizaj/Uroševac have a better awareness of their rights, understanding of police's work and procedures, and knowledge of important details of the case/crime (case number, office in charge, crime preventive measures and follow-up procedures).

When analysing levels of satisfaction, victims from both areas are considerably more satisfied with the KP's reaction time, the behaviour of the KP officer and investigator, the way the matter was dealt with, and the overall service received. Nevertheless, a higher number of "very satisfied" responses was recorded from Ferizaj/Uroševac's victims as well as, in aggregate, a higher percentage of positive answers (sum of "very satisfied" and "fairly satisfied" responses). Additionally, data disaggregation by gender and ethnicity was also conducted, recording results similar to the general trend above described.

The victim-centred approach has shown positive results throughout its implementation and in comparison with the area in which no actions were undertaken. An additional survey conducted in parallel to the one on victims' satisfaction has also shown that levels of confidence in KP are higher in the area of Ferizaj/Uroševac, when compared against those in Gjilan/Gnjilane. Nevertheless, both surveys should be repeated in a specific timeframe and results compared to prove significant correlations between the victim-centred approach and levels of confidence and satisfaction.

The process of reforming policing institutions currently remains one of the main pillars of SSR programmes and a milestone for promoting the rule of law and democratic governance in post-conflict environments. Before

and through the conflict, policing institutions often act in support of and to protect the ruling political power (so-called "regime policing"), securing interests of the dominant group and keeping under control the population rather than protecting citizens and communities. In this context, SSR programmes are game-changers through which reforms towards a model of democratic policing is implemented. Indeed, democratic policing means that police are accountable to the law, protect individuals, adhere to the concept of democratic civilian control and comply with international human rights standards and policing best practices.

More often than not, those reforms happen within the same policing institution, setting down codes of conduct, duty manuals, standard operating procedures, as well as improving skills of police officers, investigators and supervisors. Moreover, officers' and units' performance are evaluated internally, relying on the idea that if the police force is properly trained and professionally enforce the law, citizens are in turn satisfied and their concerns effectively addressed.


In the context of SSR programmes, the victim-centred approach not only changes the way policing institutions evaluate their capacity to address citizens' concerns, but more importantly it shifts the focus of these evaluations, from the police to the victims. Through victims' interviews, policing institutions can identify flaws in their daily operations and address


them in a more effective way, in turn affecting positively citizens' levels of trust. Moreover, this approach, which includes also the follow-up surveys on confidence and satisfaction, indirectly and positively affects the overall implementation of SSR

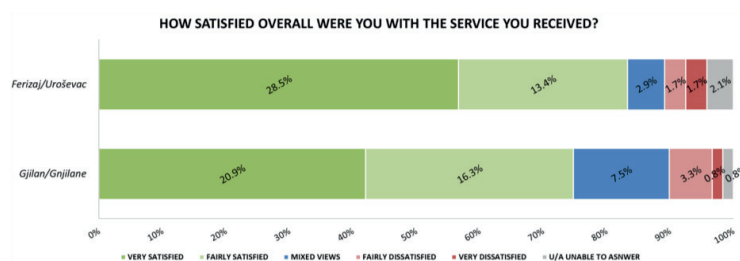
programmes. Once surveys are rolled out and results gained, SSR actors can rely on those results to foster their analytical capacity, in turn improving their future interventions in the sector. International donors' funds and actions can be more effectively and efficiently tailored to address current flaws and answer specific needs of the given policing institutions.

All references to Kosovo on this article shall be understood in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

The contents of this article, the views, opinions, findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the OSCE and/or its participating States, and/or UNMIK.

 **William Brame** is the Lead Advisor on Community Policing and Deputy to the Head of Law Enforcement Component for the EU Advisory Mission (EUAM) to Ukraine.

 At the time the article was written, **Giuseppe Lettieri** was a trainee at the Department of Security and Public Safety of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. Currently, he works as Information Analyst for the UN Mission in Kosovo.



An off-shoot of the **Human Security** quarterly, published in Italian by T.wai, the T.note HS Series focuses on non-traditional security and conflict transformation.