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University of Aruba

Emy Laclé

August 29, 2025



# Introducing Community Policing in Aruba: Exploring Strategies and Factors for Successful Implementation

**Introducing Community Policing in Aruba: Exploring Strategies and Factors for  
Successful Implementation**

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### **Abstract**

In the Aruban context, public safety and trust between the police and community remain central to social stability and development. Community policing is a strategy that emphasizes collaboration between police officers and citizens to reduce crime, build trust, and enhance the quality of life. Although Aruba introduced the concept of Polis di Bario in 2000, community policing has yet to be fully implemented across the island. This study aims to define key concepts such as community policing while identifying the perceptions, expectations, internal, and external factors that influence its implementation in Aruba. Through a qualitative research design, this thesis employed semi-structured interviews with 16 participants, both police officers and community members from the districts of Noord, Santa Cruz, Oranjestad, and San Nicolas. Findings revealed that while there is a strong willingness to adopt a community-oriented policing model, challenges remain, including organizational culture, limited resources, and unclear role expectations. However, the study also uncovered important strengths and opportunities, such as existing neighborhood ties, stakeholder openness, and alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 16. The results provide practical recommendations to support a more transparent, community-driven policing model and promote long-term safety and collaboration in Aruba.

**Keywords:** Community Policing, Aruba, Polis di Bario, Public Safety, Police-Community Relations, Qualitative Research.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Problem Statement

Public safety and police-community relations are fundamental to a thriving society. Across the globe, law enforcement's role has shifted, with many regions embracing community policing to foster trust and reduce crime. Community policing is a crime reduction strategy that envisions a closer partnership between community members and police to collaboratively address safety concerns (Abiloye et al., 2023). In Aruba, public safety faces distinct challenges (Personal Communication, 18 September 2024). Despite a booming tourism sector that significantly contributes to the economy, crime remains a concern, compounded by a general lack of trust in law enforcement. The current policing strategy, primarily focused on enforcement, has led to a disconnect between the police and the community (Bachani Di Giovanna & Peterson, 2023). This enforcement-driven approach, while effective in certain respects, often undermines the crucial cooperation and trust needed for sustainable crime reduction. Community policing offers a promising alternative, encouraging local residents to actively participate in their safety alongside law enforcement. Countries that have adopted this model have reported notable success in reducing crime and improving police accountability (Zambounis-Black, 2023). Furthermore, effective crime combat requires good collaboration with various partners both within and outside the security chain, emphasizing the community's critical role in these efforts (Gobierno di Aruba, 2023).

Given that tourism is a key pillar of Aruba's economy, the reduction of crime rates is vital to sustaining growth and ensuring the safety of both residents and visitors. Any rise in crime could negatively impact this sector, affecting local businesses, hotels, and other industries that rely on tourism (Masnoticia, 2023). However, Aruba has yet to fully implement community

policing, which may be contributing to the existing gaps in police-community relations.

Understanding the perceptions and expectations of both community members and police officers is essential for assessing the feasibility and potential success of implementing community policing in Aruba.

## **1.2 Relevance of the Research**

This research on community policing in Aruba is essential for strengthening the bond between the police and citizens, ultimately fostering a safer community. It embodies the principles of sustainable governance by aiming for long-term crime prevention through active civic participation. The movement toward community policing has gained momentum in recent years as police and community leaders search for more effective methods to enhance public safety and improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Community policing encompasses a range of philosophical and practical approaches that continue to evolve, with strategies varying according to the needs and responses of the communities involved (Mishra, 2011).

This initiative also aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which underscores the importance of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, ensuring access to justice for all, and establishing effective, accountable institutions at all levels. By incorporating community policing, individuals immediately contribute to the reduction of crime and the advancement of the rule of law, which results in safer neighborhoods and stronger communities. (United Nations, 2015). Engaging citizens in the policing process not only empowers communities but also enhances the effectiveness of law enforcement strategies (Office of Justice Programs, 1994). As highlighted by Abiloye et al., (2023), community policing strategies can significantly reduce crime when communities actively participate in maintaining their safety. It is crucial to recognize that the prevention of crime, the detection and punishment of offenders, the

protection of life and property, and the preservation of public tranquility are the direct responsibilities of ordinary citizens aided by the police (Malatji et al., 2023). This research, therefore, contributes to the broader conversation about sustainable governance and the vital role of community engagement in public safety efforts.

Aruba's current enforcement-driven policing model often results in a gap between the police and the communities they serve, fostering mistrust and limiting the effectiveness of law enforcement in ensuring public safety (Bachani Di Giovanna & Peterson, 2023). Community policing, a strategy that promotes partnership and collaboration between the police and community members, emerges as a more holistic approach to crime reduction. By encouraging open communication and shared responsibility, this model aims to build trust and reduce crime more sustainably (Abiloye et al., 2023). Tourism, which plays a critical role in Aruba's economy, further emphasizes the need for a safer environment. Any significant rise in crime could negatively impact the sector, which would affect not only tourists but also local businesses and community members reliant on tourism for their livelihoods (Masnoticia, 2023). Strengthening police-community relationships through community policing is not only a strategy for enhancing public safety but also for protecting the economic future of the island. This aligns directly with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which highlights the importance of building peaceful, inclusive societies and fostering accountable institutions to support long-term growth and development (United Nations, 2015). This research seeks to explore how community policing can address the existing disconnect in Aruba by examining the perceptions of both police officers and community members. It will also investigate the internal and external factors influencing the successful implementation of community policing in Aruba, ultimately aiming to foster stronger collaborations and a safer society.

A key component of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which emphasizes the advancement of justice, peace, and robust institutions, is community policing (United Nations, 2015). Community policing is a safer, more inclusive, and more participatory approach to public safety by encouraging cooperation between law enforcement and the community. SDG 16's objective to lessen violence, guarantee equal access to justice, strengthen public institutions, and increase law enforcement's transparency is in line with this policing strategy. Officers who interact with community members are better able to comprehend local issues, deal with the underlying causes of crime, and put early intervention strategies into practice. Studies have indicated that communities with robust community policing initiatives have reduced crime rates and enhanced public safety (Mandeza, 2023). Ensuring universal access to justice is a crucial component of SDG 16 (United Nations, 2015). The focus of community policing is on problem-solving, conflict resolution, and alternative justice mechanisms, whereas traditional policing models tend to concentrate on reactionary crime responses. This strategy guarantees that everyone has an equal chance to interact with law enforcement without fear of retaliation or prejudice, particularly members of marginalized and vulnerable groups. Furthermore, community policing encourages increased responsibility in police organizations, which lessens problems with misconduct, corruption, and overuse of power (Mandeza, 2023).

Another key component of SDG 16 is the strengthening of inclusive, responsible, and efficient institutions. In order to guarantee that public safety is a shared duty rather than exclusively dependent on law enforcement officials, community policing strengthens the relationships between police, local governments, companies, schools, and community organizations (United Nations, 2015). Community policing assists in developing locally driven solutions to safety and crime issues by incorporating citizen participation into policing strategies.

By ensuring that police strategies take into account the many demands of the communities they serve, such inclusive governance techniques eventually increase the legitimacy and public trust in law enforcement organizations (Mandeza, 2023). The significance of inclusive and participatory decision-making is further emphasized by SDG 16. Residents can express their concerns, work with law enforcement, and influence local security policies through community policing (United Nations, 2015). In multicultural countries, where promoting mutual trust and understanding between law enforcement and other social or ethnic groups is crucial to preserving peace and cohesiveness, this participative method works especially well. Notwithstanding its many benefits, community policing still has drawbacks, including a lack of funding, opposition to change, and the requirement for specialized officer training (Mandeza, 2023).

However, community policing can be an effective instrument for realizing SDG 16's vision of inclusive, just, and peaceful communities by funding community participation, raising public awareness, and guaranteeing that law enforcement officers receive the necessary training (United Nations, 2015). Community policing provides a long-term, sustainable strategy for advancing safety, justice, and peace for all via improved community-police partnerships and a dedication to openness and accountability.

Beyond its practical and societal relevance, this research also carries important academic value. It contributes directly to the Faculty of Arts & Science (FAS) core values of sustainability, diversity, civic participation, and identity (University of Aruba, 2022). By addressing issues of governance, institutional capacity, and community engagement, it also aligns with the Organization, Governance & Management (OGM) program's mission to study the interaction between social transformations and organizations within the local context (University of Aruba,

2022). More specifically, it demonstrates how local institutions can be strengthened through participatory approaches, which is a central theme within the OGM program.

In addition, the small island context of Aruba makes this study particularly significant. Small island states often face unique challenges, including limited resources, high dependency on tourism, and closely connected communities where trust in public institutions is essential (Brogden & Nijhar, 2005). Looking at community policing in Aruba not only contributes to international discussions on policing but also offers valuable insights into how governance models can be adapted to small, interconnected societies. This perspective ensures the research speaks directly to the realities of island governance, while also providing lessons that can be applied in similar contexts.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

To guide this research, the following main research question has been formulated: What strategies can the Korps Politie Aruba use to successfully implement community policing, emphasizing the importance of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, ensuring community safety, and maintaining low criminality in Aruba?

To answer this question, several sub-questions have been developed to guide the research process:

1. How do community members and police officers in Aruba's districts perceive the aim and introduction of community policing?
2. What expectations do police officers and community members have regarding their roles in a community policing approach?
3. What are the main internal factors that influence the implementation of community policing in Aruba?

4. What are the main external factors that influence the implementation of community policing in Aruba?

#### **1.4 Research Method**

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the perspectives of police officers and community members on the introduction of community policing in Aruba.

Understanding the perspectives of police officers is essential, as their commitment, experiences, and institutional readiness play a crucial role in the implementation and long-term success of community policing (Skogan, 2006). Equally, gaining insight into the views of community members is important, as their trust, engagement, and cooperation are fundamental to fostering effective and sustainable police-community relationships (Myhill, 2012). A qualitative approach is chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' insights, attitudes, and expectations, which are essential for understanding the factors influencing the successful implementation of community policing. According to Bryman (2021), qualitative research is particularly effective for studying complex social phenomena where rich, descriptive data is needed to capture the distinction between human behavior and interactions. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to gather in-depth insights from police officers and community members across Aruba's four main districts: Oranjestad, San Nicolas, Noord, and Santa Cruz.

#### **1.5 Report Guide**

This report is structured to provide a comprehensive exploration of community policing in Aruba, progressing logically from an introduction of the problem to practical recommendations for implementation. It begins with Chapter 1, which lays the foundation for the research by introducing the problem statement, relevance, research questions, and the overall

research context. This chapter explains why community policing is crucial for enhancing public safety in Aruba and details the underlying challenges related to police-community relations.

Following this, Chapter 2 delves into the research context, which elaborates on how Korps Politie Aruba (KPA) entails. After this, Chapter 3 delves into the conceptual framework, exploring existing literature on community policing models globally, with a particular focus on their application in small island nations like Aruba. This chapter provides the academic grounding necessary to understand how community policing can work in a context similar to Aruba's. Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology, explaining the approach used for collecting and analyzing data. It details the qualitative methods employed, including interviews with both community members and police officers, and how these methods are designed to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1. Next, Chapter 5 presents the findings from this research. It offers a detailed analysis of how police officers and community members perceive the introduction of community policing, highlighting both the potential benefits and the challenges identified through the research process. Building on the findings, Chapter 6 engages in a critical analysis of the data, linking the perceptions and expectations of both police and the public to the broader conceptual framework. This chapter analyzes the internal and external factors influencing the success of community policing, drawing comparisons with international case studies and best practices. Finally, Chapter 7 provides a conclusion and recommendations, offering practical steps that can be taken to successfully implement community policing in Aruba. It reflects on the study's implications for governance and public safety in Aruba and discusses how community policing can contribute to long-term sustainability in both safety and social cohesion.

## **2. Research Context**

This chapter provides the necessary background to understand the institutional setting, strategic direction, and local framework in which community policing is being examined. It outlines the role and structure of the Korps Politie Aruba (KPA), including its vision, mission, and objectives, and concludes with a focus on the concept of community policing through the lens of "Polis di Bario" a local model rooted in the structure of the wijkagent.

### **2.1 Description of Korps Politie Aruba (KPA)**

The Korps Politie Aruba (KPA) was officially established in 1986 and serves as the national police organization responsible for maintaining law and order across the island. The force operates under the authority of the Minister of Justice and Public Works and consists of various divisions, including general police services, criminal investigations, traffic control, and administrative operations. KPA plays a central role in crime prevention, public safety, and emergency response (Personal Communication, September 2024).

The force is structured across four main districts: Noord, Santa Cruz, Oranjestad, and San Nicolas. These districts are each served by local police stations and are collectively responsible for covering Aruba's diverse communities and environments. With a total workforce of over 600 staff members, including both operational and administrative personnel, the KPA continues to evolve in response to emerging safety needs (Personal Communication, September 2024).

The vision of the KPA is to be a professional, service-oriented, and adaptable police force that fosters a safe, fair, and cooperative society. The organization envisions policing as a collaborative effort between law enforcement officers and the community, grounded in trust, openness, and accountability (Personal Communication, 2024).

KPA's mission is to maintain public order and enforce the rule of law by providing high-quality, respectful, and transparent policing services. The organization is committed to protecting the safety and rights of citizens and visitors through prevention, timely response, and meaningful partnerships with community members (Personal Communication, 2024).

The key objectives of the KPA include reducing crime, increasing police visibility and effectiveness, building strong ties with communities, ensuring lawful and respectful enforcement practices, and developing professional capacity through continuous training and innovation (Gobierno di Aruba, 2023).

## **2.2 Polis di Bario**

Polis di Bario refers to Aruba's localized community policing strategy, centered around the role of the wijkagent or neighborhood police officer. In this model, the Polis di Bario is not only a law enforcer but also a social connector, problem-solver, and the first point of contact between the police and the community. The approach is rooted in preventive policing and emphasizes presence, accessibility, and trust-building within specific neighborhoods (KPA, 2000). The Polis di Bario concept was formally documented in 2000 in the KPA report *Polis di Bario: een verkennend onderzoek over de wijkagent*. According to this document, the Polis di Bario plays an essential role in gathering local intelligence, identifying early signs of disorder, offering tailored interventions, and maintaining continuous communication with residents and institutions such as schools, social services, and youth organizations (KPA, 2000). The effectiveness of the Polis di Bario is tied to their ability to act independently within their assigned neighborhood and collaborate proactively with external agencies.

The island is divided into four operational districts: Noord, Santa Cruz, Oranjestad, and San Nicola, each of which includes one or more Polis di Bario responsible for managing

community policing activities in their designated area. The Polis di Bario monitors developments in their assigned district, initiates neighborhood outreach, and encourages civic involvement in crime prevention. They act as a central point of contact for both the police institution and the community, contributing significantly to the public's sense of safety (KPA, 2000). The introduction of Polis di Bario aimed to bridge the gap between the police and community members by creating a permanent police presence in the neighborhoods. This initiative was influenced by community policing principles that had shown success in the Netherlands, the United States, and Canada. While initial implementation in Aruba faced logistical and structural limitations, the foundation it laid continues to influence how community-based policing is conceptualized today (KPA, 2000).

Currently, aspects of the Polis di Bario model are still in place, although its full potential has not yet been realized. The Polis di Bario remains active in various neighborhoods, but staffing shortages and shifting priorities have affected consistency. Nonetheless, the model remains highly relevant as Aruba considers reforming its policing practices to prioritize collaboration, prevention, and transparency in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16 (United Nations, 2015).

Polis di Bario is important not only because it brings the police closer to the people, but also because it promotes problem-solving at the local level and empowers communities to become active participants in public safety. The model emphasizes communication, early intervention, and shared responsibility, which are critical components in maintaining long-term trust and security across Aruba's diverse districts.

### **3. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

#### **3.1 Defining Community Policing**

In order to make neighborhoods safer, community policing emphasizes cooperation and shared accountability, which represents an important shift in the way law enforcement interacts with communities (Office of Justice Programs, 1994). According to Abiloye et al. (2023), it is a model in which the public actively engages in their own safety, moving the police from being viewed as enforcers or outsiders to trusted partners. As stakeholders of justice, community members are essential to this partnership, collaborating with law enforcement to guarantee excellent services and a feeling of mutual security.

Adding to this, the Community Policing Association describes community policing as a joint police-community effort that recognizes issues of crime and disorder and engages all community members in the search for solutions (Fridell & Wycoff, 2004). This viewpoint emphasizes a straightforward but impactful concept: the police are not able to resolve every problem on their own. The entire community must actively participate in addressing crime and enhancing the quality of life. In a similar way, community policing is defined by Ejiofor, n.d as an organizational philosophy that promotes collaborations between law enforcement, local government, and community members, emphasizing proactive problem-solving and long-term engagement to tackle the root causes of crime and social challenges. This concept is expanded upon by Gbenemene and Adishi (2017), who characterize community policing as a social construct that blends two fundamental components: "community" and "policing". "Community" describes the social ties and shared identity of a neighborhood, whereas "policing" concentrates on what law enforcement should do to benefit society as a whole. These two concepts come

together to form a strong structure in which law enforcement and the community work together to establish trust and address the issues that matter most to the community members.

Community policing is fundamentally a mindset rather than just an approach. To develop long-lasting solutions, it's about establishing connections, encouraging trust, and cooperating with the community. By emphasizing collaboration and shared accountability, community policing creates the groundwork for safer, more unified communities where police officers and community members can live together peacefully (Office of Justice Programs, 1994). With its emphasis on cooperation, trust, and shared accountability for safety and well-being, community policing signifies a revolutionary change in the dynamic between police officers and community members. Community policing shifts the role of the police from being seen as distant authority figures to being active partners who collaborate with community members in promoting development, building justice together, and delivering effective policing services. (Abiloye et al., 2023).

Fundamentally, community policing is a collaboration in which police officers and community members identify and resolve criminal and disorderly problems. Gbenemene and Adishi (2017) emphasize the dual nature of community policing, as previously discussed, where the phrase combines two essential elements: "community" and "policing." The policing component deals with the actual duties and obligations of law enforcement, while the community component is based on beliefs about what makes a cohesive and functional organization. When combined, these ideas form a dynamic system that produces results that are better than the sum of their parts. Notwithstanding its potential, community policing is difficult to implement.

### ***3.1.1 Impacts of Community Policing***

As police and community officials look for more efficient ways to improve public safety and the quality of life in their areas, the movement toward community policing has accelerated in recent years. Community policing is still developing quickly and includes a range of theoretical and practical techniques. Although the demands and reactions of the communities involved influence the techniques used in community policing, all community policing initiatives share some fundamental ideas and factors. “Democracy in action is what community policing is. Local government, civic and corporate leaders, public and private organizations, citizens, churches, schools, and hospitals must all actively participate. It should be the duty of everyone who cares about the neighborhood's well-being to protect it”(Office of Justice Programs, 1994).

Community Policing's Impact in the Netherlands: the concept of Dutch COP is neither static nor well-defined. The Netherlands claims that the strategy's five primary objectives are to: minimize the distance between the Dutch police and the general public; closely monitor a range of local issues; adopt a proactive and preventive work style in addition to a reactive one; cooperate with other organizations; and encourage citizen participation. While the fundamental objectives of COP have not changed, the organization's look and culture have changed significantly over time. While COP was created in 1977, by the early 1980s, most police departments had not implemented neighborhood teams. By the early 1990s, nearly all Dutch forces were implementing "A Changing Police" style teams. COP replaced the old method of basic policing and became the new police regulations (Van Sluis et al., 2010).

### ***3.1.2 Different Scopes of COP in the Netherlands***

In the Netherlands, community policing was introduced using four distinct scopes: the social scope, which focuses on fostering community involvement and trust; the law enforcement

and crime prevention scope; the institutional and administrative scope; and the professional scope, which focuses on police training, development & standards.

Focusing on social scope, one of the main objectives of community policing in the Netherlands is to improve the relationship between police officers and the communities they protect. This requirement emerged in the 1970s as a result of the general dissatisfaction with police strategies during the 1960s social instability and student protests (Van Sluis et al., 2010). Dutch citizens started calling for a police force that was more approachable and focused on providing services, compared to one that served mainly as a tool of state control. For it, a greater emphasis on integration and community trust was required. Officers were viewed as state agents rather than community members in the early days of Dutch community policing (Van Sluis et al., 2010). “A Change Police, a 1977 policy statement, was used in Holland to set the foundations for a police force that was more socially integrated” (Van Sluis et al., 2010). In order to establish enduring relationships with locals, community officers were established to serve as permanent representatives in neighborhoods. Making police more friendly and accessible was intended to ensure that officers served as problem solvers and promoters of community well-being and uphold the law. Dutch community policing aggressively encourages citizen participation in law enforcement through programs, including neighborhood watch programs, local security events, and cooperative problem-solving strategies. Participatory policing and citizen involvement were especially highlighted. The Dutch government also encourages local government representatives and community members to work together to develop safety regulations tailored to each community's unique requirements (Van Sluis et al., 2010). By doing this, police officers and community members now have more trust in one another, which promotes better collaboration in reporting crimes and resolving issues.

Finally, social integration difficulties were the main focus of the social scope. Despite efforts to improve police-community relations, difficulties still exist because some community police find it difficult to consider community members as active partners; instead, they see them simply as information partners. Community engagement is inconsistent due to regional variations in policing approaches. Additionally, officers occasionally struggle to strike a balance between social work and enforcement, especially when dealing with socially disadvantaged groups such as the homeless and mentally ill (Van Sluis et al., 2010).

Secondly, public safety and crime prevention are key components of community policing. Early community policing initiatives in the Netherlands prioritized social work, stressing the development of trust and mediation (Van Sluis et al., 2010). However, the strategy changed to a more balanced approach that combined enforcement-based and preventive efforts as the political and social climates changed. Crime rates increased by the 1990s, and new problems like drug trafficking and organized crime surfaced. In response, Dutch law enforcement stepped up their attempts to suppress crime by implementing aggressive police techniques like intelligence-led policing and zero-tolerance regulations. Both hard policing crime control, law enforcement, criminal investigations and soft policing community participation, problem-solving, and mediation are now included in the modern Dutch community police concept (Van Sluis et al., 2010). In addition to actively participating in criminal investigations, community officers prioritize neighborhood safety and prevention.

The Dutch Community Policing (COP) concept incorporates several proactive strategies to improve crime prevention. According to Van Sluis et al., community officers use Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) to identify trends in local crime and carry out focused preventative actions. To discourage criminal activity, police enforcement frequently employs

area policing, which involves stepping up their presence in high-crime regions. To address crime before it gets out of hand, neighborhood-based crime prevention also encourages collaboration between local institutions, police, and community members. Even while Dutch community policing has been successful, there are still many issues. Community officers' active involvement in criminal investigations is frequently hampered by a lack of resources, and interdepartmental obstacles can occasionally cause a divide between community officers and investigative police units, which reduces efficiency. Additionally, the public's expectations are often higher than what officers can provide, which irritates community members who want more rapid responses and stronger measures to prevent crime (2010).

Thirdly, police, local governments, and other stakeholders needed to coordinate for community policing in the Netherlands to function within a formal institutional framework. The regional divisions of the Dutch police force guarantee both local autonomy and centralized monitoring to efficiently address safety issues unique to each city (Van Sluis et al., 2010). To improve public safety, the Dutch COP relies on departmental cooperation. While social work organizations help with homelessness, mental health issues, and domestic violence, local governments create security policies. While housing firms help with identifying and preventing crimes related to housing, schools, and other educational institutions collaborate with police on youth intervention programs. Law enforcement works with businesses and private security companies to enhance crime prevention in commercial areas. Decision-making can be slowed down by bureaucratic inefficiencies, according to Van Sluis et al., and execution might become inconsistent due to conflicts between local and national agendas. Furthermore, irregular cooperation across multiple organizations may impact the effectiveness of safety programs. For

the Dutch COP, improving interagency cooperation and expediting administrative procedures remain a top priority (2010).

Finally, to guarantee that officers can interact with communities, analyze crime trends, and work with other organizations, the professional scope of community policing in the Netherlands is centered on training, development, and standards (Van Sluis et al., 2010). To facilitate this, the Dutch Police Academy offers police officers specialized training programs that provide them with expertise in intelligence-led policing, conflict mediation, problem-solving (POP), and neighborhood involvement techniques. Even while training is uniform across the country, police can nonetheless modify their approaches to meet local needs (Van Sluis et al., 2010). Despite these initiatives, problems still exist. A lack of resources frequently prevents officers from properly participating in community-based problem-solving, and some officers still prioritize law enforcement more than community involvement. Furthermore, performance demands like hitting arrest and fine targets might occasionally take attention away from proactive policing initiatives. For community policing in the Netherlands to continue successfully, support networks must be strengthened, and a more balanced approach between involvement and enforcement must be encouraged (Van Sluis et al., 2010).

The effective mobilization of community support requires different approaches in different communities. Establishing trust and obtaining cooperation is often easier in middle-class and wealthy communities than in poorer communities, where mistrust of police may have a long history. Building bonds in some neighborhoods may involve supporting basic social institutions, for example, families, churches, and schools that have been weakened by pervasive crime or disorder. The creation of communities is necessary if lasting alliances that nurture cooperative efforts are to be sustained. Under community policing, the police become

both catalysts and facilitators in developing these communities (Office of Justice Programs, 1994).

### ***3.1.3 Implementation Worldwide***

In addition, it has been suggested that community policing can play a primary role in changing how all government services are provided at the community level (Office of Justice Programs, 1994). As elaborated on the scopes and approaches used in the Netherlands for the introduction of community policing in the Netherlands, it was that COP has been a crucial aspect of Dutch policing for the past thirty years, despite significant changes in Dutch society and several policing innovations that have come and gone. To reconcile the various needs of the state, society, and profession, police and police authorities had to adapt, and COP had to change in line with this. The Dutch COP had to deal with some issues, including policing paradigms that are sometimes more focused on the state or the police as a profession. It goes without saying that the Dutch COP has been a work in progress and that there have been challenges in its planning and execution. The Dutch COP has demonstrated itself to be the most resilient and comprehensive platform, surviving numerous shifts in the public and professional perceptions of police work despite these ongoing attacks (Van Sluis et al., 2010). “Implementing community policing necessitates fundamental changes in the structure and management of police organizations. Community policing differs from traditional policing in how the community is perceived and its expanded policing goals” (Office of Justice Programs, 1994). While crime control and prevention remain central priorities, community policing strategies use various methods to address these goals. The police and the community become partners in addressing problems of disorder and neglect. For example, gang activity, abandoned cars, and broken

windows that, although perhaps not criminal, can eventually lead to serious crime (Office of Justice Programs, 1994).

### ***3.1.4 Aruba's Communities***

Given Aruba's small population and connected communities, community policing could be beneficial (Aruba Population, 2024). However, local factors, including cultural norms, the status of police-community relations, and the resources available for police officer training will all impact how well community policing works in Aruba (Brogden & Nijhar, 2005). Determining how Aruba can modify the community policing model to meet its unique requirements requires understanding these components.

### **3.2 Police Officers' Role and Response to Community Policing Implementation**

Police officers interact with the community the most and are the main providers of police services. They will handle most of the community's daily policing demands as part of community policing initiatives, with support from their immediate superiors, other police units, and relevant social and governmental organizations. Ensuring that the entire organization supports patrol officers' efforts will be the command staff's and upper-level management's responsibility (Office of Justice, 1994). Optimizing pleasant interactions between police officers and community members is essential to effective community policing. The use of patrol cars is just one way that police services are delivered. To be closer to the neighborhood, police departments may install mini-stations and patrol on foot, bicycle, scooter, and horseback in addition to car patrols. Police and community members will be able to voice issues and develop solutions through regular community forums and meetings (Office of Justice, 1994). Officers assigned to the same shift and route for an extended period of time will become well-known to the community and gain insight into its daily operations. The first step in building trust is the enhanced police presence,

which also helps to lower community members' fear of crime and contributes to neighborhood security. If neighborhood people are to engage in policing actively, fear must be decreased. If people believe their actions may endanger their safety, they will not take any action (Office of Justice, 1994). According to the police officer, police/community partnerships involve visiting individuals in their homes to provide security advice, assisting in the organization and support of neighborhood watch organizations, and frequent community meetings, and speaking with local business owners to learn about their issues and concerns. A police officer might, for instance, canvas the neighborhood to get information about an increase in home invasions, then follow up with the neighbors to let them know when the person responsible is arrested. The head of the police department will explain and converse with the community about the significance of controversial police strategies for officer and public safety. At every level of the department, community groups, residents, leaders, and local government representatives will be actively consulted for their problems and suggestions, and the department administration will meet with community members regarding gang suppression strategies. In this police/community relationship, problem-solving will become a collaborative endeavor, and the provision of essential social services will be recognized as being intrinsically tied to preventing crime (Office of Justice Programs, 1994).

### **3.3 Expectations of this implementation**

Cooperation between police officers, local government, community organizations, and community members is essential to effective community policing. These stakeholders are essential in creating policing strategies, guaranteeing that initiatives to prevent crime are transparent, community-driven, and sensitive to local issues. In order to establish safe and inclusive areas, community policing is a collaborative endeavor that involves engagement from a

variety of groups, not just police officers (Denney & Jenkins, 2013). Involving stakeholders improves crime prevention initiatives, promotes more efficient problem-solving, and builds public confidence in law enforcement. Local governments contribute resources and support policies, while volunteers and community organizations offer grassroots projects, engagement strategies, and local knowledge (Polzin, 2020). Through collaborative decision-making, information exchange, and active participation, stakeholders contribute to the development of strong neighborhoods where public safety demands are met by police officers. The role of community policing stakeholders and their expectations for law enforcement compliance, openness, and flexibility are examined in the parts that follow. It is crucial to understand these elements in order to create community policing models that are inclusive, sustainable, and successful.

### ***3.3.1 Role of Stakeholders***

Stakeholders are essential to the implementation and effectiveness of community policing because they participate in operational and strategic decision-making. Their participation guarantees that police officers' activities are in line with community needs, enhances public safety, and promotes cooperative efforts to avoid crime (Denney & Jenkins, 2013). With different but related duties, local government officials, police officers, community organizations, and volunteers are some of the most important stakeholders (Polzin, 2020). Local governments are important legal partners in allocating funds, developing policies, and coordinating with law enforcement. To solve security issues on a larger scale, they must support crime prevention initiatives, distribute resources wisely, and encourage interagency cooperation as part of community policing (Denney & Jenkins, 2013). Additionally, community participation, building confidence between community members and police officers, and supporting crime prevention

measures are all made possible by faith-based organizations, nonprofits, and volunteer groups (Hargreaves, n.d.). To develop effective policing techniques, these organizations offer firsthand knowledge of neighborhood issues.

In the past, volunteers and community organizations have been essential to preventing crime, especially through safety campaigns and neighborhood watch programs. Nonetheless, a shift toward digital engagement is necessary to maintain community involvement in policing activities, as social and demographic shifts have affected participation rates (Hargreaves, n.d.). Online engagement techniques like social media outreach, digital forums, and virtual community meetings must be incorporated into modern policing strategies to accommodate these changes and ensure accessibility for a larger range of stakeholders (Denney & Jenkins, 2013) In order to ensure that stakeholder participation results in practical crime prevention measures, law enforcement organizations operate as both coordinators and facilitators in community policing. It is the responsibility of officers in neighborhood police teams to interact directly with members of the community, learn about their issues, and use regional approaches to problem-solving (Polzin, 2020). Open channels of contact between police agencies and local leaders and groups are also essential since community-based intelligence frequently offers a deeper understanding of safety issues than can be obtained from basic crime data alone (Hargreaves, n.d.). A Dorset housing estate, where antisocial behavior among young people became a community-wide issue, served as an illustration of successful stakeholder engagement. Through involving previously uninvolved citizens and promoting neighborhood problem-solving, law enforcement enabled the community to assume joint accountability for safety precautions (Hargreaves, n.d.).

Stakeholder involvement goes beyond enforcement actions, as this instance demonstrates, and is essential to developing long-term solutions for improving public safety and reducing

crime (Polzin, 2020). Law enforcement, local government representatives, volunteers, and community organizations must collaborate to create successful crime prevention plans as part of a multi-stakeholder approach to community policing. Incorporating contemporary digital platforms with conventional engagement techniques allows stakeholders to guarantee long-term involvement and strengthen linkages between law enforcement and communities (Denney & Jenkins, 2013).

### ***3.3.2 Expectations of Stakeholders***

Stakeholders in community policing have different but related expectations about police involvement, openness, and problem-solving skills. One major expectation is that law enforcement will develop successful engagement techniques that reach disadvantaged and difficult-to-reach people in addition to easily accessible community groups (Hargreaves, n.d.). To make police engagement initiatives more inclusive and successful, it is necessary to understand demographics, social dynamics, and the particular difficulties that certain communities experience (Denney & Jenkins, 2013). Law enforcement is expected by local authorities, neighborhood watch groups, and nonprofits to maintain open lines of communication so that community members can express their worries and offer insights that may not be captured by crime statistics alone (Polzin, 2020). Official crime data are a major source of information for police; however, personal community opinions offer important insights for spotting and resolving new public safety concerns (Hargreaves, n.d.). A key element of contemporary police strategies is making sure that the public can engage in meaningful communication with law enforcement (Denney & Jenkins, 2013).

Additionally, stakeholders expect law enforcement to adjust to new engagement strategies. In the past, community policing initiatives used face-to-face meetings, public areas,

and interactions with street police to involve locals. However, new digital technologies and changing demographics have made the use of social media outreach, online platforms, and virtual interaction tools necessary (Hargreaves, n.d.). Police agencies must adapt to these developments by implementing technological strategies that guarantee all parties involved, regardless of their physical location, can take part in conversations about crime prevention (Polzin, 2020). Stakeholders anticipate that police officers will include community intelligence into their crime prevention strategies in addition to engaging with the public. Stakeholders stress the value of integrating local knowledge and lived experiences into policing operations, even though law enforcement organizations rely on crime records and predictive analytics (Denney & Jenkins, 2013).

An example of this expectation was demonstrated at a housing estate in Dorset, where cooperative community involvement was effective in addressing antisocial behavior among young people. The local enforcement team made it possible for community-driven solutions that promoted stability and safety enhancements over the long run by collaborating with previously uninvolved citizens (Hargreaves, n.d.). Maintaining accountability and transparency in law enforcement is another important objective. Local groups and community members anticipate that police departments will consult when making decisions, especially when it comes to safety measures and regulations aimed at preventing crime (Polzin, 2020). Public trust in law enforcement rises dramatically when police strategies incorporate direct community involvement and represent local goals. This fosters better cooperation and improves public safety outcomes (Denney & Jenkins, 2013).

However, there is a chance that community cooperation and trust will be weakened, weakening public safety initiatives, if law enforcement does not maintain transparency,

inclusion, and responsiveness. (Hargreaves, n.d. ). Stakeholders often expect law enforcement to provide responsiveness, cooperation, and inclusivity as a priority in community policing initiatives. To ensure successful and long-lasting community safety programs, it is imperative to fortify community engagement, incorporate community intelligence into policing strategies, and adjust to contemporary participation trends (Denney & Jenkins, 2013). According to Pollin (2020), community policing shifts from being a police-led project to a collaborative effort in which all parties involved actively contribute to social cohesion, public safety, and crime reduction.

### **3.4 Internal and External Factors**

A contemporary law enforcement strategy known as "community policing" encourages cooperation between police and the public in order to improve safety and foster confidence. The adoption of this strategy poses difficulties with regard to organizational culture, sustainability, and resource allocation, despite the fact that it has proved effective in lowering crime and improving police-community relations. A more comprehensive understanding of the impact of community policing and its opportunities for improvement can be obtained by analyzing its advantages and disadvantages.

Patterson (2007) points out that introducing community policing gradually is one of the main challenges in its implementation, as it frequently results in the short-term deployment of resources without sufficient planning. According to Mastrofski et al. (2007), there are still significant obstacles to the success of community policing, including traditional police culture, organizational resistance, and a lack of funding. Community policing is a useful substitute for conventional policing techniques since it provides substantial benefits in promoting trust and enhancing crime prevention, notwithstanding these difficulties.

### ***3.4.1 Strengths and Weaknesses***

The possibility of community policing to foster confidence between communities and police officers is among its most important advantages. Relationships between police officers and community members have been damaged as a result of traditional policing approaches, which have frequently promoted a sense of fear and disconnection (Personal Communication, September 2024). However, open communication, teamwork, and constructive encounters are encouraged by community policing, which humanizes police officers and fosters respect for one another (Mandeza, 2023). Residents are more likely to report crimes, offer helpful intelligence, and cooperate with law enforcement to improve neighborhood safety when police and the community are familiar with one another (Lesniak Institute, 2023). The efficiency of community policing in lowering crime is another significant benefit. Crime rates have significantly decreased in cities that have implemented community-based policing approaches. For example, after putting community policing strategies into place, “Violent crime in Camden, New Jersey, decreased by 52%” (Mandeza, 2023). Stronger community involvement in crime prevention initiatives, proactive problem-solving, and greater police presence are primarily responsible for this decrease. Communities are more inclined to collaborate on crime reduction initiatives when police officers are perceived as an ally rather than an outside force, resulting in a more secure and united atmosphere (Abiloye et al., 2023). Youth engagement and their perception of police officers are also significantly impacted by community policing. Because of bad experiences or structural problems, many children, especially those from underprivileged neighborhoods, grow up to mistrust police officers. To ensure that law enforcement is viewed as a protective and supportive presence rather than a danger, police should connect with younger populations through programs like neighborhood events, mentorship programs, and school outreach activities

(Mandeza, 2023). This early communication lowers the risk of young people engaging in criminal activity and develops enduring beneficial relationships. Community policing also encourages law enforcement to be more accountable. There is a stronger focus on ethical policing methods because officers who frequently interact with community members are more conscious of how their activities impact the people they serve. Officers are more likely to utilize de-escalation strategies to resolve confrontations and are less likely to use excessive force when they build personal relationships with members of the community (Abiloye et al., 2023).

### ***3.4.2 Opportunities and Threats***

Despite its many advantages, community policing faces several challenges. One of the most pressing concerns is resource allocation. Effective community policing requires significant funding for officer training, community programs, and technological support. Many police departments struggle to sustain long-term community policing initiatives due to budget constraints and competing priorities (Lesniak Institute, 2023). Without adequate resources, the effectiveness of community policing diminishes, making it difficult to maintain continuous community engagement (Abiloye et al., 2023).

The difficulty of achieving officer compliance and changing the culture of police officer organizations is another drawback of community policing. Because they perceive community policing as less authoritative and more time-consuming than traditional enforcement-based strategies, some officers oppose the shift to community-centered techniques (Mandeza, 2023). Successful community policing may include organizational changes in police culture and tactical strategies, as well as appropriate training and encouragement for officers to adopt a problem-solving approach (Abiloye et al., 2023). Furthermore, it might be difficult to determine how well community policing efforts are working. In contrast to traditional policing, which is

based on measurable indicators like crime statistics and arrest rates, the effectiveness of community policing is frequently assessed by gains in public trust in law enforcement, safety perceptions, and community ties. Policymakers find it difficult to evaluate these qualitative factors, which makes evaluating the success of community policing programs difficult (Lesniak Institute, 2023). The potential for uneven application is yet another significant flaw.

Based on region, community demographics, and law enforcement leadership, community policing strategies differ significantly. Sometimes police departments find it difficult to incorporate community policing into their current operations, which results in implementation efforts that are disconnected or unsuccessful (Abiloye et al., 2023). Without precise rules and accountability procedures, community policing may not have the desired effect and may not be able to create lasting ties within the community. Last but not least, public cooperation is not always assured. Even though the goal of community policing is to foster trust and promote community involvement, not all community members are at ease interacting with police officers, especially in areas where there has been a history of systematic discrimination, ethnic profiling, or police violence (Mandeza, 2023). Long-term dedication, openness, and legislative changes that tackle the underlying reasons of mistrust are necessary for restoring trust in these regions (Abiloye et al., 2023). With its many advantages for community involvement, police accountability, and crime reduction, community policing is still a potent strategy for contemporary law enforcement. It is a desirable substitute for conventional policing models because of its advantages, which include lowering crime, fostering trust, including young people, and practicing ethical policing. Problems, including a lack of resources, officer opposition, uneven execution, and public mistrust, however, underscore the necessity of ongoing assessment and development.

Community policing can be further developed to satisfy the changing requirements of varied communities while maintaining public safety and the mutual trust between law enforcement and the public with the right resources, training, and dedication. By encouraging cooperation, trust, and proactive crime prevention strategies, community policing offers substantial opportunities for both communities and law enforcement organizations. However, it also has problems that could make it less effective, especially when it comes to public opinion, resource constraints, and new criminal patterns. To ensure community policing's sustainability and long-term effectiveness, it is crucial to comprehend both its opportunities and risks. The potential of community policing to make areas safer through solid police-community cooperation is among its most beneficial advantages. Law enforcement organizations and community members can more successfully identify and address local crime issues by promoting cooperative problem-solving (Mandeza, 2023). Through this collaboration, the police are able to better understand local problems and create tailored crime prevention plans (Lesniak Institute, 2023). Through early intervention, community policing also offers the chance to enhance public safety. Law enforcement can assist in preventing more major crimes by addressing social disorders, small crimes, and community concerns before they become more serious (Abiloye et al., 2023).

The Broken Windows Theory, which claims that upholding law and order and dealing with small violations will greatly lower major crimes, is consistent with this proactive strategy (Lesniak Institute, 2023). The improvement of social integration and public confidence in law enforcement represents yet another important opportunity. Community policing is a means of repairing connections and reestablishing trust in law enforcement in many areas, especially those where there has historically been mistrust of the police (Mandeza, 2023). Officers can become

more approachable and integrated into the community by interacting with local leaders, community organizations, and youth initiatives (Lesniak Institute, 2023).

Additionally, community policing provides an opportunity for citizen empowerment, enabling locals to actively participate in public safety and crime prevention initiatives. Individuals can participate in decision-making processes and work with law enforcement on local security issues through initiatives like citizen advisory boards and neighborhood watch groups (Abiloye et al., 2023). A stronger sense of community ownership and accountability for public safety is fostered by this shared obligation (Mandeza, 2024). Community policing also offers a chance for international learning and best practice implementation. Various socioeconomic and cultural contexts can benefit from the knowledge provided by nations and localities that have successfully adopted community policing strategies (Abiloye et al., 2023). Law enforcement organizations can increase the efficacy of their community policing programs by researching and putting into practice tried-and-true tactics from other areas (Lesniak Institute, 2023). Despite all of its advantages, community policing has a number of issues that might hinder its effectiveness. Inconsistent community involvement is among the most urgent dangers. Not all community members are willing to interact with police officers, even if community policing promotes citizen participation. This is especially true in communities where there are historical conflicts, a fear of reprisals, or cultural barriers (Abiloye et al., 2023). The effectiveness of community policing programs might be greatly diminished in the absence of consistent involvement (Lesniak Institute, 2023). Limited funds and resources pose a serious challenge as well.

Technology to enhance engagement efforts, community outreach initiatives, and specialized officer training are all necessary for community policing (Mandeza, 2023). Many law

enforcement agencies manage to maintain long-term community policing programs due to budgetary constraints, which results in implementation gaps and decreased efficacy (Abiloye et al., 2023). A major obstacle to community policing initiatives is bureaucratic and political interference. The long-term sustainability of community participation initiatives and the distribution of funds may occasionally be impacted by political objectives, changing laws, and changes in leadership (Lesniak Institute, 2023). Public trust can be damaged, and community policing strategies can become inconsistent when police initiatives are influenced by politics (Mandeza, 2023). Changing patterns of criminality pose a serious hazard as well. Different police strategies are needed for new types of crime like organized crime, cybercrime, and terrorism, whereas traditional community policing techniques are intended to handle local crimes like vandalism, theft, and public disturbances (Abiloye et al., 2023). To counter new challenges, law enforcement organizations must constantly modify strategies while upholding the fundamentals of community policing (Lesniak Institute, 2023). Social differences and conflicts between communities can also make community policing programs less effective. Building confidence between various groups and law enforcement can be difficult in diverse areas where there are ethnic, religious, or political problems (Mandeza, 2023). A comprehensive strategy that takes into account multilingual obstacles, cultural sensitivities, and community-specific requirements is necessary for policing in multicultural environments (Abiloye et al., 2023). If these issues are not resolved, community policing programs might not be adopted by some groups, which could result in unfair enforcement and tense relationships with underserved populations (Lesniak Institute, 2023). The success of community policing may also be threatened by internal police force resistance. Implementing community engagement strategies may be resisted by certain police officers, especially those used to traditional enforcement-based

techniques (Mandeza, 2023). A change in law enforcement culture is necessary for community policing to be successful, where officers value collaborating with community members to solve problems and form relationships (Lesniak Institute, 2023). Resistance to change may prevent community policing programs from being fully implemented if appropriate training and institutional support are not provided (Abiloye et al., 2023). There are many chances to strengthen community ties, increase public safety, and empower citizens to avoid crime through community policing. Its proactive crime prevention strategies, cooperative approach, and capacity to raise public confidence in law enforcement are its main advantages. But it is also susceptible to problems, including uneven involvement, financial constraints, political meddling, and changing patterns of criminal activity. Strong collaborations between law enforcement and the community, consistent investment, and ongoing adaptation are all necessary to counter these challenges. Law enforcement can build more resilient, safer communities where everyone shares responsibility for public safety by utilizing community policing's advantages while reducing its risks.

### **3.5 Models**

Community policing is a proactive approach to law enforcement that aims to improve public safety and prevent crime by fostering cooperation between the police and the community. With distinct strategies and ideologies, various community policing models have developed over time. Two different methods of community policing are represented by the Broken Windows Policing Model and the Social Disorganization Policing Model. The framework known as Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) also stresses the use of analytical techniques to address crime trends (Reisig, 2010). The Broken Windows Policing Model is based on the Broken Windows Theory, which argues that direct manifestations of disorder, like loitering, vandalism, and public

intoxication, establish an atmosphere favorable to more serious criminal activity. The focus of this style is on order maintenance policing, in which police officers proactively deal with minor violations in order to stop more serious crimes (Reisig, 2010). Environmental crime prevention is a crucial strategy in this concept, whereby better lighting, clean public areas, and engaged community members discourage criminal activity. Instead of waiting for criminal reports, the strategy also promotes proactive law enforcement, in which cops actively patrol high-disorder areas. In order to keep the peace, the community must be involved in seeing and reporting minor infractions. Cities like New York in the 1990s have shown the efficacy of this model, as evidenced by the significant drop in crime rates that followed its implementation (Reisig, 2010). Critics counter that it can result in over-policing in underprivileged areas, disproportionately targeting minority and low-income groups. Although the model is successful in lowering visible disorder, some research indicates that rather than being eliminated, crime may just move to different areas. Additionally, it ignores fundamental social problems that fuel crime, like unemployment, poverty, and a lack of educational opportunities.

By emphasizing the social and structural factors that lead to crime, the Social Disorganization Policing Model adopts a different strategy (Reisig, 2010). Instead of focusing on law enforcement as the main strategy for preventing crime, this model seeks to strengthen social institutions and community networks. To build closer community ties that discourage criminal activity, police collaborate closely with businesses, schools, religious institutions, and neighborhood associations. Involving locals in crime prevention programs encourages a sense of shared responsibility and gives them the ability to actively participate in public safety (Reisig, 2010). In addition, officers serve as mediators and problem solvers, assisting in the settlement of disagreements and interpersonal conflicts before they turn into criminal activity. Working

together with educational institutions, employment programs, and social services guarantees that the underlying factors that contribute to crime, such as deprivation and lack of opportunity, are addressed (Reisig, 2010). Long-term crime reduction has been achieved through this model by enhancing public trust in law enforcement and strengthening community resilience. However, strong institutional support, resource accessibility, and proactive community involvement are necessary for its success. In contrast to the Broken Windows Model, which results in noticeable changes right away, the Social Disorganization Model calls for sustained investment in social infrastructure. Furthermore, if citizens lack confidence in the police, attempts to form cooperation might encounter opposition, which would make community-driven police strategies challenging to execute (Reisig, 2010).

Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) is an analytical framework that supports community policing projects, while the Broken Windows and Social Disorganization Models present two distinct viewpoints. POP, which was created by Herman Goldstein in 1979, is centered on using a systematic approach to identify and address persistent crime issues. Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment make up the SARA Model, which helps law enforcement identify trends in crime, carry out focused interventions, and assess how well they work. POP places more of an emphasis on crime prevention through data analysis, customized strategies, and community cooperation than traditional policing, which mostly responds to crimes (Reisig, 2010). POP has proven to be successful in preventing domestic violence, gang intervention programs, and area policing. Law enforcement can more effectively deploy resources and create focused crime prevention strategies by concentrating on particular crime trends and their fundamental causes. However, specific training in data analysis and problem-solving methods is necessary for the effective application of this methodology. According to some critics, POP

might ignore more significant socioeconomic problems and place an undue emphasis on police actions rather than neighborhood-based remedies (Reisig, 2010).

### **3.6 Other Strategies**

While community policing prioritizes fostering relationships and working together with community members, other law enforcement strategies concentrate on intelligence collection, data-driven decision-making, and technology innovations. These alternative approaches aim to improve resource allocation, improve crime prevention, and increase operational efficiency. Among the most important strategies are Technology-Driven Policing, Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP), Problem-Oriented Policing (POP), and Evidence-Based Policing (EBP).

#### ***3.6.1 Problem-Oriented Policing (POP)***

Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) is a tactical technique beyond incident response to target and resolve certain crime and disorder problems. The focus of this approach, which Herman Goldstein created, is on proactive problem-solving rather than conventional reactive policing. POP encourages officers to work with stakeholders, examine the root causes of crime, and create focused interventions to stop problems from happening again.

A fundamental element of POP is the SARA model, which stands for Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment. Before doing an extensive investigation to find the underlying reasons for the issue, officers first identify criminal trends and public safety issues (Reisig, 2010). These are followed by implementing strategic responses, which could include environmental changes, regulatory reforms, or collaborations with community organizations. They conclude by evaluating the success of these interventions and making any necessary strategy adjustments (RAND Corporation, n.d.). POP has effectively addressed quality-of-life concerns, lowered crime in high-risk neighborhoods, and enhanced ties between the police and

the community. However, police training, collaboration between agencies, and a dedication to ongoing assessment are necessary for its success. POP improves the efficacy of law enforcement beyond basic enforcement actions by determining and tackling the root causes of crime (RAND Corporation, n.d.).

### ***3.6.2 Evidence-Based Policing (EBP)***

The research-driven strategy known as Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) uses scientific methodologies to identify the best policing tactics. EBP employs factual data, thorough evaluations, and statistical analysis to inform law enforcement decision-making rather than depending on custom, emotions, or reactive reactions. EBP's core concept is that police strategies must be grounded in evidence-based findings rather than assumptions (American Society of Evidence-Based Policing, n.d.). This approach encourages police departments to work with academic institutions, researchers, and crime analysts to evaluate the effects of various policing strategies. Police departments can identify strategies that effectively reduce crime by using field experiments, randomized controlled trials, and crime data. A well-known use of EBP is hotspot policing, in which police officers are sent to high-crime regions following predictive analytics and crime mapping. According to studies, focusing resources in these locations can dramatically reduce crime rates without escalating unfavorable public relations exchanges. Public trust, resource allocation, and police accountability have all benefited greatly from EBP. However, obstacles like data accessibility, change fear, and the requirement for specialized training might make it difficult to implement. Despite these obstacles, EBP continues to be a potent instrument for enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of police.

### ***3.6.3 Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP)***

The data-driven strategy known as Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) emphasizes the use of criminal analysis and intelligence to direct police activities. As organized crime, terrorism, and cybercrime became more complicated and demanded a more focused and strategic approach to law enforcement, ILP developed. For effective resource deployment, ILP depends on proactive decision-making, crime pattern analysis, and systematic data gathering. To find criminal trends, high-risk individuals, and possible threats, law enforcement organizations use surveillance data, intelligence reports, and predictive analytics. Instead of only responding to incidents, this strategy enables police to foresee and prevent crime (Kaseware, 2024). The potential of ILP to improve interagency cooperation is one of its main benefits. Police can coordinate efforts to combat cross-jurisdictional crimes, including drug networks, cybercrime, and human trafficking, by exchanging intelligence among law enforcement organizations. By depending on objective intelligence rather than subjective evaluations, ILP additionally reduces bias in decision-making. Although it has advantages, ILP has drawbacks, including preserving transparency, guarding against intelligence abuse, and guaranteeing data security. To fully utilize ILP, police organizations must also spend money on educating personnel in data analysis and intelligence collection. ILP gives law enforcement a proactive, effective, and strategic approach to crime prevention when it is properly applied.

### ***3.6.4 Technology-Driven Policing***

Modern digital tools are used in technology-driven policing to increase the effectiveness of law enforcement, improve crime detection, and allocate resources as efficiently as possible. In order to remain ahead of new dangers as crime changes, police departments are depending more and more on cutting-edge technology. The combination of automatic license plate readers

(ALPRs), surveillance cameras, and real-time crime centers is one of this strategy's most revolutionary features. Law enforcement can trace suspect movements, keep an eye on high-crime areas, and react quickly to occurrences thanks to these tools. Furthermore, facial recognition software and gunshot detection systems have greatly enhanced criminal investigations and suspect identification (Webb, 2023). By enhancing police operations' transparency and offering real-time situational awareness, drones and body-worn cameras have further transformed law enforcement. Predictive policing has also been improved by the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, which enables departments to foresee crime trends and deploy personnel strategically. Even while technology-driven policing has numerous benefits, privacy, data security, and ethical issues are raised. To avoid discrimination and human rights abuses, the application of facial recognition software and prediction algorithms needs to be strictly regulated. Furthermore, the appropriate use of law enforcement technology depends on making sure that officers have adequate training in cybersecurity and digital forensics (Webb, 2023). Technology-driven methods will become more and more important in law enforcement strategies as policing continues to change. Police agencies can improve public safety initiatives, investigation capabilities, and crime prevention by utilizing data analytics, surveillance technologies, and artificial intelligence.

Although community policing is still an essential strategy for establishing rapport and encouraging participation, alternative policing models like technology-driven policing, evidence-based policing, problem-oriented policing, and intelligence-led policing give law enforcement organizations more resources for preventing crime and improving operational effectiveness. These strategies emphasize the use of cutting-edge technology, research-based interventions, data analysis, and intelligence collection to improve the efficacy of police

enforcement. In order to balance technological integration, intelligence-driven operations, and community participation, the most effective policing models frequently incorporate components from several different approaches. Law enforcement agencies may create more effective, accountable, and efficient public safety measures by integrating criminal investigation, scientific research, problem-solving strategies, and digital innovations. The first step in implementing all of the other strategies is to introduce community policing in Aruba.

### **3.7 Conceptual Framework**

This study's conceptual framework integrates stakeholder participation, internal and external elements, and anticipated results to propose an updated community policing model in Aruba. At the heart of the framework is community policing, which forms the basis of KPA's initiatives. Since the four districts of Aruba have different requirements and viewpoints, the model acknowledges their importance and suggests customized policing strategies. Internal elements like corporate culture, training, and resource allocation impact law enforcement methods' effectiveness. External elements that affect the degree of cooperation between the police and the public include governmental backing, socioeconomic circumstances, and community involvement. Positive results, such as more public trust in law enforcement, improved safety, crime prevention, and improved teamwork, are anticipated from the application of community police strategies that emphasize empowerment, communication, and collaboration. KPA can make sure that its community policing programs continue to be flexible, responsive, and in line with the distinctive features of Aruba's social and political environment by implementing this model. Understanding the application of community policing in Aruba is based on the study's theoretical framework. It incorporates crucial components necessary for a community-based police model to succeed, including stakeholder participation, internal and

external factors, and strategic policing techniques (Denney & Jenkins, 2013). This part examines the fundamental ideas driving this study and their relevance to the Aruban policing situation, drawing on well-established theories and frameworks. In order to solve issues of crime, disturbance, and public safety, community policing is based on proactive crime prevention strategies that prioritize cooperation between law enforcement and the community (Lesniak Institute, 2023). Wilson and Kelling (1982) developed the Broken Windows Theory, which contends that preserving order and treating small social abnormalities might discourage more serious crimes. Aruba's strategy for community policing, in which social cohesiveness and faith in law enforcement are important factors in determining public safety efforts, is consistent with this notion. Goldstein's (1979) Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) also offers a formal framework for recognizing, evaluating, and resolving crime tendencies that are unique to a community. The Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment (SARA) methodology provides a systematic approach to problem-solving that helps law enforcement to effectively address local issues. These models are useful resources for adjusting policing activities to the various demands of various districts throughout the island, especially considering Aruba's distinct socioeconomic and cultural milieu (Mandeza, 2023).

Community policing's effectiveness is affected by both internal and external influences. Internal factors that significantly influence law enforcement practices include organizational culture, training, and the availability of resources. The Korps Politie Aruba (KPA) recognizes the need for a highly skilled and professional police force that can handle today's crime issues (Arnhem, 2024). In the absence of appropriate staffing, technology infrastructure, and ongoing professional development programs, community policing efforts may not be as successful in the long run. The effectiveness of community policing strategies is determined by external factors

like political backing, socioeconomic status, and community involvement. Trust and cooperation are essential elements of a successful community policing framework, and they can only be fostered through collaboration with local organizations, governmental bodies, and civic associations. Diverse socioeconomic circumstances and community attitudes toward law enforcement may have an impact on how involved stakeholders are in these initiatives in Aruba.

In order to effectively handle the varied needs of Aruba's districts, community policing strategies must prioritize empowerment, cooperation, and communication (Denney & Jenkins, 2013). Collaboration guarantees that local stakeholders and members of the community collaborate with law enforcement to create solutions that are relevant to issues related to crime. Mutual trust is developed through communication, enabling officers and community members to exchange confidential information, thereby boosting public trust in law enforcement. Empowerment reinforces the idea that public safety is a shared responsibility, empowering community members to actively participate in crime prevention initiatives (Polzin, 2020). Incorporating evidence-based police strategies like technology-driven policing, intelligence-led policing, and hotspot policing will help KPA make its community policing initiatives more successful. The success of community policing programs can be related to these strategies' ability to increase operational effectiveness, improve crime detection, and support data-driven decision-making (Lesniak Institute, 2023). Several significant results are anticipated from Aruba's successful implementation of community policing. Building stronger ties between community members and law enforcement will boost cooperation and confidence, which will enhance communication and lessen public fear of crime. By tackling criminal activity before it escalates, proactive crime prevention techniques will improve public safety. Early intervention

programs that stop small transgressions from turning into more serious crimes will be promoted by a community-centered policing strategy.

Additionally, increased police effectiveness will strengthen law enforcement operations and promote public security when backed by appropriate training, resource allocation, and interagency cooperation. The introduction of community policing ideas into Aruba's policing framework promotes Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which places an emphasis on justice, peace, and strong institutions, and is in line with international best practices (United Nations, 2015). This strategy emphasizes how crucial transparent, responsible, and cooperative policing is to attaining long-term security results for Aruba. The integration of community policing into Aruba's law enforcement system is represented in an organized manner by the conceptual framework. The overall concept that directs KPA's strategy is community policing, and the police department operates in four districts of Aruba, each with its own unique requirements and viewpoints. While external factors like community engagement, socioeconomic conditions, and political support affect the level of cooperation between law enforcement and the public, internal factors like training, organizational culture, and resources shape how effective community policing efforts are. The guiding concepts of community policing strategies, such as empowerment, communication, and collaboration, guarantee that police operations continue to be inclusive and sensitive to community concerns. Increased public trust, safety enhancements, a decrease in crime, and improved community cooperation are all expected results of community policing. This conceptual model provides a methodical way to assess how community policing is being implemented in Aruba, guaranteeing that law enforcement tactics are sustainable, driven by the community, and successful in lowering crime.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework, 2025



#### **4. Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter describes the research design, participant selection, data collection methods, and analytical approach used in this study. Since the goal is to explore the perceptions and expectations of both police officers and community members regarding community policing in Aruba, a research approach that allows for deep engagement with participants' experiences and viewpoints is essential. The methodology is carefully structured to ensure the study captures diverse perspectives, fosters rich discussions, and provides meaningful insights into how community policing could be introduced in Aruba.

##### **4.1 The Research Design**

This study uses a qualitative research design to better understand how community policing is perceived in Aruba. Since the topic deals with people's experiences, views, and expectations, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate (Bryman, 2021). It allows room to explore feelings, social interactions, and the realities of both police officers and community members across different districts. To collect the information, semi-structured interviews were used. This method gave the interviews enough structure to stay on topic but also left space for participants to speak freely. It helped uncover personal experiences and opinions that might not have come up with a stricter or more limited format (Bryman, 2021).

##### **4.2 Selection of Respondents**

This study aimed to capture the perspectives of two key groups at the heart of community policing: police officers and community members. These groups are essential to the success of any community policing approach, as collaboration and mutual trust between them are central to its implementation. Although the conceptual framework also recognizes other stakeholders, such as government institutions, schools, and community organizations, the scope of this study

focused specifically on police officers and community members. This choice was made because they form the frontline relationship in community policing, and their interaction and trust are critical for the practical success of this approach. To ensure a balanced and representative view, the study included participants from four districts in Aruba: Noord, Oranjestad, San Nicolaas, and Santa Cruz. Each district has its own social and policing dynamics; some may have a stronger police presence, others more community involvement, and each faces its own safety challenges. Including participants from all four districts made it possible to explore both shared themes and district-specific concerns.

In total, 16 individuals were interviewed, 8 police officers and 8 community members, with two of each selected per district. To keep the selection process fair and avoid bias, a random sampling method was used for both groups (Bryman, 2021). For police officers, a full list of active personnel assigned to each district was obtained. From these lists, two police officers per district were randomly selected. This allowed for a variety of professional perspectives and ensured that no one was handpicked based on convenience or visibility.

For community members, the approach was also random but carried out in the field. The researcher walked through public spaces in each district and approached residents directly. If someone confirmed they lived in the district and agreed to participate, they were included in the study. This method helped bring in genuine, everyday voices, including those who may not usually be involved in formal consultations or community discussions.

By using random sampling for both groups, the study ensured that a wide range of experiences and viewpoints were represented, while still staying grounded in the local realities of each district. As Bryman (2021) notes, this kind of sampling is valuable in qualitative research

when the goal is to gather authentic and diverse insights directly connected to the research questions.

In addition to random selection, attention was also given to diversity among participants, particularly in terms of gender and age, to ensure that different perspectives were represented. This means that the sampling strategy combined both random and purposive elements. Purposive sampling is often used in qualitative studies when researchers want to include participants who can provide a variety of views and experiences that might not appear through random sampling alone (Bryman, 2021). Random sampling, meanwhile, was valuable for maintaining fairness and reducing bias in the process, while purposive sampling allowed the inclusion of individuals from diverse backgrounds. This combination enriched the data and offered a more complete understanding of community policing in Aruba (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

### **4.3 Research Instruments**

The research instrument used to collect data was semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A). According to Bryman (2021), in a semi-structured interview, the researcher uses an interview guide, a list of questions designed to explore key topics while still allowing flexibility in how the questions are asked and answered. Participants are encouraged to respond in-depth, and the interviewer can ask follow-up or unplanned questions based on what the interviewee shares. This approach gives participants the space to express their views freely, while still ensuring that the conversation stays aligned with the research objectives.

For this study, the researcher developed two tailored interview guides: one for police officers and one for community members. These guides were carefully designed to reflect the different roles and experiences of each group, while still covering shared themes such as their understanding of community policing, their expectations, and the internal and external factors

that could influence their success. This strategy helped ensure that the information collected was relevant, specific, and meaningful to each group's perspective, and supported the overall goal of building a deeper understanding of how community policing is perceived across Aruba's four districts.

#### **4.4 Data Collection and Procedures**

The interviews were conducted either in person or virtually, depending on what worked best for the participant. This flexibility helped accommodate individual schedules and preferences. Whether in person or online, interviews took place in settings that felt comfortable and safe for participants. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour, depending on how much the participant chose to share. Participants were given the option to speak in either Papiamentu or English, based on the language they felt most comfortable using. Before starting the interview, participants received a clear explanation of the study's purpose, how their responses would be used, and their rights as participants. Everyone provided written consent before the interview began. For virtual interviews, consent was provided either in advance via email or verbally at the start of the session, followed by written confirmation when needed. The interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview guide, which ensured that key topics were addressed while still allowing for open, flexible conversation. As Bryman (2021) explains, semi-structured interviews are particularly useful in qualitative research because they create space for participants to express their views freely while still covering core themes.

The guide included questions on participants' understanding of community policing, their experiences with local police, and their expectations and concerns regarding the implementation of community policing in Aruba. While the guide offered structure, it remained open-ended to encourage participants to explore ideas in their own way, leading to deeper and more personal

insights. With permission, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure that responses were captured accurately. If a participant preferred not to be recorded, the researcher took detailed notes instead. All data was stored securely and handled with strict confidentiality, accessible only to the researcher and thesis supervisor.

#### **4.5 Data Analysis**

To examine the information gathered from the interviews, this study applied thematic analysis, a widely used method in qualitative research that helps identify recurring ideas, patterns, and key themes within narrative data. This approach was well-suited to the topic of community policing, as it allowed the researcher to explore the personal experiences and social dynamics shared by both police officers and community members (Bryman, 2021). The analysis began with transcribing each interview. Whether interviews were conducted in person or online, every word was transcribed to ensure that no important detail was lost and that participants' voices were accurately captured. For interviews where audio recording was not possible, comprehensive notes were reviewed and organized in the same structured manner. Once the transcripts were complete, the researcher conducted initial coding by carefully reading through the responses and highlighting meaningful words, expressions, and ideas. These codes were then grouped into broader categories, which reflected common points raised during the interviews. The process of thematic analysis was ongoing and flexible (Bryman, 2021). As the researcher engaged more deeply with the data, some themes became clearer, while others were refined or combined. This allowed the final themes to reflect the real essence of the conversations, rather than forcing the data into rigid categories. The goal was to remain true to what participants shared, while also organizing the findings in a way that would clearly address the research questions. Through this process, the study was able to explore how both police officers and

community members perceive community policing, what each group expects from their roles within that framework, and which internal and external factors might affect the success of implementing this approach in Aruba. Since community policing is deeply rooted in relationships, trust, and cooperation, thematic analysis offered the best way to uncover the perspectives of those directly involved.

Beyond simply analyzing the interviews, this study also contributes to the broader conversation around public safety in Aruba. By focusing on the unique social and organizational context of the island, it offers relevant and grounded insights into how stronger partnerships between police and communities might be developed. As Bryman (2021) explains, qualitative methods like thematic analysis help researchers understand not just what people think, but why they think it, especially in complex, real-world situations such as policing and community trust.

#### **4.6 Role of the Researcher and Ethical Considerations**

Since this study touches on sensitive topics like police conduct, trust, and community relationships, ethical considerations were essential throughout the entire process. Before each interview, participants were given a clear explanation of the study's purpose, how their information would be used, and what their participation involved. They were reminded that their involvement was completely voluntary, and they could choose to stop or withdraw at any point without having to give a reason. Each participant signed a consent form confirming they understood and agreed to take part. To protect privacy and confidentiality, no names or identifying information appear in the transcripts or final report. All interviews were anonymized, and the data were securely stored, accessible only to the researcher and thesis supervisor. The researcher maintained a neutral and respectful role during the interviews, avoiding leading

questions or personal influence. The goal was to ensure that all responses genuinely reflected the participant's own views and experiences.

As Bryman (2021) emphasizes, informed consent and confidentiality are fundamental ethical principles in qualitative research. They help create a safe space where participants feel comfortable sharing their honest opinions, especially when the subject involves trust in institutions and public safety. These measures helped ensure that all participants felt respected and in control of their involvement at every stage of the study.

#### **4.7 Strengths, Validity, and Reliability**

This research followed a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews to explore how community policing is perceived by both police officers and community members across four districts in Aruba. Including voices from these two key groups allowed for a deeper and more balanced understanding of the topic, while also reflecting the real-life dynamics between the police and the communities they serve.

According to Bryman (2021), validity in qualitative research refers to the credibility and accuracy of the conclusions drawn from the data. In this study, efforts were made to enhance validity by selecting participants who were directly connected to the research topic, either as active police officers working in the districts or as residents of the districts involved. A combination of random and purposive sampling was used. Random sampling helped reduce bias and allowed for fairness in the selection process, while purposive sampling was important for ensuring diversity in age and gender, which enriched the data with a broader range of perspectives (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

Reliability, as described by Bryman (2021), relates to the consistency and dependability of the research process. To support this, a carefully developed semi-structured interview guide

was used for all interviews. This ensured that the same core topics were addressed with each participant, while still giving them room to express their thoughts freely. The consistent use of this guide helped make the data more comparable across interviews, which adds to the overall reliability of the findings. By combining structured consistency with space for individual insight, this research remained grounded in the lived experiences of the participants while also following clear and repeatable procedures. This balance contributed to the study's overall strength and trustworthiness.

## **5. Results**

This chapter presents the research findings based on the qualitative data collected through sixteen semi-structured interviews. The structure follows the sub-questions formulated in Chapter 1, with a distinction made between the perspectives of police officers and community members from four districts in Aruba: Santa Cruz, Oranjestad, San Nicolaas, and Noord. The findings are organized thematically in line with the research sub-questions and provide an in-depth understanding of how both groups perceive and experience community policing.

Emerging themes have also been incorporated into the results, as they contribute to a deeper understanding of the subject matter. This chapter serves as the foundation for the analytical discussion presented in Chapter 6, where the findings are critically examined in relation to the literature and conceptual framework. Furthermore, the insights gathered here will contribute to answering the main research question, which will be addressed in the conclusion.

### **5.1 Descriptive data**

This section provides an overview of the research participants. A total of 16 respondents took part in the study, equally divided between eight police officers and eight community members. These participants were purposefully selected from four key districts in Aruba: Santa Cruz, Oranjestad, San Nicolaas, and Noord.

The eight police officers were selected based on their active involvement in district-level policing. They shared meaningful insights about current practices, strengths, and weaknesses within the organization, and their views on working with the community. The eight community members came from different age groups and had varying levels of involvement in neighborhood activities. They spoke openly about their experiences with the police, their expectations for a community policing approach, and what they believe could help or hinder its implementation.

**Table 1.1***Characteristics of Interview Participants: Community Members*

Gender	District	Age Group	Year in District
F	San Nicolaas	35-40	38
F	Noord	50-55	52
M	Oranjestad	25-30	27
M	Oranjestad	60-65	62
M	Noord	65-70	67
F	Santa Cruz	40-45	44
F	Santa Cruz	30-35	30
M	San Nicolaas	15-20	19

*Note:* Total respondents = 8**Table 1.2***Characteristics of Interview Participants: Police Officers*

Gender	District	Age Group	Year in Korps
F	Santa Cruz	40-45	23
M	San Nicolaas	45-50	29
F	Oranjestad	45-50	28
M	Noord	40-45	14
F	San Nicolaas	60-65	39
M	Santa Cruz	45-50	27

Gender	District	Age Group	Year in Korps
F	Noord	35-40	13
M	Playa	45-50	26

*Note:* Total respondents = 8. Overall Total Respondents: 16

## 5.2 Perceptions of Community Policing and Police Officers

This subchapter presents the findings related to the perceptions of community members and police officers from the four districts of Aruba: Santa Cruz, Oranjestad, San Nicolaas, and Noord. It explores how both groups understand and interpret the concept of community policing, as well as their current experiences with police-community relations. The results reflect varying levels of awareness, trust, and expectations, offering insight into how community policing is currently viewed and the factors shaping these perceptions.

### 5.2.1 Police Officers' Perceptions

The perceptions of police officers regarding community policing reveal a strong emphasis on building trust, understanding community needs, and maintaining a visible, consistent presence in the neighborhoods they serve. Most officers described community policing as a model that goes beyond law enforcement; it is about being actively involved in the lives of community members and working collaboratively to address their challenges. As stated by one officer, “Community policing, to me, means being aware of all the developments and challenges within the community. It involves understanding the daily struggles people face and being mindful of individuals with addictions, illnesses, or disabilities” (Interviewee 9, personal communication, 9

April 2025). Officers highlighted that their role is not only to enforce laws but also to identify and report issues and connect people to the right support services.

Another officer explained that community policing means working closely with the community and with the Ketenpartners to address long-term problems. This officer emphasized that trust is the foundation of success in this approach, based on their experience in both regular surveillance and community policing roles (Interviewee 11, personal communication, 9 April 2025). Similarly, Interviewee 14 (personal communication, 8 April 2025) described community policing as acting as a bridge between the police and the public, stressing the importance of coordination with key community contacts and the need for specialized training to provide targeted information. Several officers distinguished between the [Polis di Bario] approach and traditional policing. One described that non-uniformed officers, such as those in [Polis di Bario], spend more time following up on cases and engaging with residents, handling everything from minor complaints like a barking dog to more serious issues (Interviewee 10, personal communication, 10 April 2025). They also mentioned that Polis di Bario needs to include community policing, and that many officers have already received training on it. While some are putting it into practice by building stronger community ties and addressing ongoing local problems, they acknowledge that the approach is still evolving and not applied consistently by everyone. They emphasized that this level of involvement helps foster familiarity and safety within the neighborhoods.

However, perceptions about how the community views the police varied. Some officers noted existing skepticism and distrust among residents, especially in the early stages of engagement. One officer recalled being told the presence of police felt like a “police state,” reflecting suspicion and fear based on past experiences (Interviewee 9, personal communication,

9 April 2025). Others reported that although trust had improved over time, it remained fragile and could be easily damaged by poor behavior from individual officers or the spread of misinformation. Misinformation, such as rumors about police misconduct or false claims shared on social media, was seen as a serious obstacle. Officers noted that inaccurate stories often spread quickly in tight-knit communities, especially when official information is lacking or delayed. This can lead to distorted public perceptions, increased fear, and reduced cooperation. As one officer explained, even a single misleading incident, if left unaddressed, can erode months of relationship-building efforts. Addressing misinformation through transparent communication and active community outreach was seen as essential to maintaining and strengthening public trust.

The fragility of trust was also linked to real events. One officer referred to the February 2025 shooting incident, which was widely covered in the media and caused significant public concern. Interviewee 11 (personal communication, 9 April 2025) explained that the event made trust in the police “very delicate,” not because confidence was fully lost, but because “doubts were raised, particularly as media coverage amplified the tension.” This reflects how quickly single incidents can shift public perception in a small island context, where news spreads rapidly and emotions run high.

Despite these challenges, there was optimism. Interviewee 11 (personal communication, 9 April 2025) also noted that the police still enjoy a good level of trust from the public, evidenced by the continued sharing of information by residents. Interviewee 16 (personal communication, 9 April 2025) supported this view, explaining that although trust does not happen overnight, it can be built through consistent presence and respectful communication. They also observed that when residents see officers regularly, especially during everyday

moments like dropping off or picking up their children from school, it gradually helps create a calmer atmosphere and builds trust over time.

Other officers emphasized “the preventive and representative nature of their roles, describing their duties as taking care of the neighborhood, ensuring cleanliness and order, and staying approachable so that community members feel comfortable reaching out” [Anos como polis ta percura pa tin seguridad y vivienda di e comunidad y cu anos por percura pa nan leefbaarheid esey nos ta percura pa ta aanwezig. Cuida e bario, preventief y representatief. Wak pa tur cos den bario ta limpi y ordena y ameno] (Interviewee 12, personal communication, 8 April 2025). Officers also stressed the importance of being patient, approachable, and able to communicate with everyone, regardless of their background or situation.

At the same time, some officers pointed out structural challenges that complicate their work. One officer explained that although they are responsible for their assigned bario, the police station itself is located far from the neighborhood, making it difficult for residents to simply walk in or reach them when needed (Interviewee 13, personal communication, 9 April 2025). Another officer expressed concern that the polis di bario often do not work together as one team, even though “at the end of the day we are working for one Aruba” (Interviewee 14, personal communication, 10 April 2025). Differences in resources across districts were also mentioned: some neighborhoods have more cars but fewer personnel, while others have sufficient personnel but lack vehicles to patrol effectively (Interviewee 15, personal communication, 10 April 2025).

**Table 2.1***Perceptions of Community Policing: Police Officers*

Themes	Perceptions
Understanding of Community Policing (CP)	Officers define CP as trust-building, proactive problemsolving, and working with ketenpartners. They see themselves as a bridge between police and community. Some link it to Polis di Bario.
Visibility & Presence	Stress being preventive and representative: taking care of neighborhoods, ensuring order and cleanliness, and being approachable and patient.
Trust	Officers describe trust as fragile. It can be damaged by misconduct, misinformation, or incidents such as the February 2025 shooting. Still, community members continue to share information.
Media & Misinformation	Officers see misinformation and rumors on social media as serious obstacles. If official communication is delayed, distorted perceptions spread quickly.
Structural Challenges	Officers pointed to stations being far from neighborhoods, lack of teamwork among <i>polis di bario</i> , and unequal resources (some districts with more cars but fewer personnel, others the reverse).

**5.2.2 Community Members' Perceptions**

Community members shared different views about community policing, but most admitted they were not really familiar with what it means. Some had never heard of it, while others thought it had something to do with the Polis di Bario. One person said, "Honestly, nothing" [Honestamente nada] to describe how much they knew (Interviewee 3, personal communication, 17 March, 2025). Another shared that they had only seen something on Facebook about the Polis di Bario but were not sure if that was the same thing (Interviewee 7, personal communication, 17 March, 2025).

However, when asked what community policing meant to them, many believed it was about being closer to the people, building trust, and talking more with residents. One participant said it's about "bringing trust and good communication" [trese confiansa y bon comunicacion] (Interviewee 1, personal communication, 14 March, 2025). Another described it as police being present in the neighborhoods and working with people on a daily basis (Interviewee 2, personal communication, 11 March, 2025). A few others mentioned that they didn't know the official meaning, but they hoped it meant police would work more closely with the community.

Most participants felt that the police are not very visible in their neighborhoods. Some said they only see officers when something serious happens, like a robbery or accident. One person shared, "I hardly ever see them around here" [Casi nunca mi ta wak nan rond kibanda] (Interviewee 2, personal communication, 11 March, 2025). Others said the police drive by but don't stop to interact or follow up on problems. For example, one resident said that police di bario responded when called, but they didn't return to check on the situation later, which left the issue unresolved (Interviewee 5, personal communication, 16 March, 2025).

Views about the police were mixed. Some people said the police are respected, while others shared feelings of frustration, fear, or disappointment. One participant explained that people in their neighborhood were angry after the shooting incident that occurred in February where a two police officers shot a young man (24ora, 2025) and said, "Even families of police officers don't want to give an opinion because they are also upset and we as community members is doubting in their trust" [Asta famia di e polis nan no kier duna nan opinion paso anan tambe ta rabia y anos como miembro nan di comunidad ta duda den nan confiansa] (Interviewee 1, personal communication, 14 March, 2025). Another said that people do not talk

to the police because they feel judged or ignored. They usually discuss problems among themselves instead of reporting them (Interviewee 7, personal communication, 17 March, 2025).

When asked about safety concerns, people mentioned theft, drugs, group fights, and aggressive neighbors. Some said the streets don't feel safe, especially because of people walking around with addictions. One participant said, "There are a lot of young people with no guidance who end up in the wrong things. You can feel the tension in the streets" [tin hopi hoben cu no tin guia cu ta caba den cosnan robes. Bo ta sinti e tension riba caya] (Interviewee 8, personal communication, 14 March, 2025).

Despite these concerns, many community members said they would welcome a community policing approach, as long as it's done sincerely and with follow-through. One person said, "If the police really work well with people, the community will appreciate it" [Si e polis traha bon cu tur hende e comunidad lo aprecia esaki] (Interviewee 7, personal communication, 17 March, 2025). Another added that some people are tired of the police, but others are still hopeful that things can change (Interviewee 8, personal communication, 14 March, 2025). Moreover, while most participants didn't fully understand what community policing is, many liked the idea of police being more present, respectful, and connected to the people. They want to feel safe, heard, and supported, and believe that better communication and trust could help bring positive change.

**Table 2.2***Perceptions of Community Policing: Community Members*

Themes	Perceptions
Understanding of Community Policing (CP)	Many are unfamiliar with CP; some confuse it with <i>Polis di Bario</i> . When asked, they described it as being closer to people, bringing trust, and improving communication.
Visibility & Presence	Police are not very visible; often only show up when serious incidents occur. Police drive by but don't interact or follow up on problems.
Trust	Trust is mixed. Some respect the police, but others feel fear, disappointment, or anger, especially after the February 2025 shooting. Doubts in trust are evident.
Media & Misinformation	Community members feel that social media and gossip amplify distrust, especially when official communication is lacking.
Safety Concerns	Theft, drugs, group fights, aggressive neighbors, and youth without guidance are key worries. People feel tension in the streets.

### 5.3 Expectations Regarding Roles

This subchapter presents the expectations expressed by both police officers and community members concerning their roles within a community policing approach. It explores how each group envisions their responsibilities, the type of collaboration they anticipate, and their assumptions about the outcomes of implementing this model. The perspectives reveal important insights into mutual expectations, potential role conflicts, and the desired level of involvement in shared safety initiatives. These findings directly address Sub-question 2, which focuses on the expectations of both groups regarding their roles in community policing.

### ***5.3.1 Police Officer's Expectations***

Police officers shared that their main role in a community policing approach is to be present, supportive, and trustworthy in the eyes of the community. Many officers emphasized that they are not just there to respond to incidents but to guide, inform, and help people through challenges. As one officer explained, police should act as tools for “informing, guiding, helping, and educating the community” [nos tey pa informa, guia, yuda y educa e comunidad] (Interviewee 9, personal communication, 9 April 2025). Officers see themselves as protectors who must stay involved in people’s lives, especially when it comes to identifying problems early and offering support before situations escalate.

Another officer described their role as being the "eyes and ears" [wowo y orea] of the neighborhood, staying alert, following up, and working closely with other organizations to solve issues (Interviewee 11, personal communication, 9 April 2025). Several officers also highlighted their role with young people, saying they sometimes serve as mentors or step in where parental guidance is missing. They believe that showing respect and communicating well is especially important, particularly for new recruits who are still learning how to handle situations professionally (Interviewee 16, personal communication, 9 April 2025). Additionally, some officers pointed out that building trust is not just about being present; it is about being honest and realistic. One officer mentioned that the polis di bario should not make promises they cannot keep, because this damages the community’s trust: “They need to feel heard, not disappointed when things don’t happen the way they were told” [Polis di barrio mester laga e comunidad mester sinti cu nan por wordo scucha y no hasi promesa y despues e no por wordo cumpli] (Interviewee 14, personal communication, 8 April 2025). When asked about the role of the community, officers consistently said that it’s a shared responsibility. Community members need

to be alert to what's happening in their surroundings, communicate with officers when they notice problems, and trust that their concerns will be taken seriously. One officer stated, "The community shares the responsibility of vigilance... they should report concerns and collaborate with us to solve them" [E comunidad mester comparti e responsabilidad di vigilancia.. Nan mester reporta duda y colabora cu nos pa yuda soluciona e problemanan] (Interviewee 9, personal communication, 9 April 2025). Another explained that both sides must work together by listening to each other and participating in workshops or awareness programs (Interviewee 10, personal communication, 10 April 2025).

Trust came up in nearly every interview. Officers stressed that without trust, there's no true collaboration. One said, "It starts with connection... both sides need to follow up on problems and stay engaged" [E ta cuminsa cu e conexion...tur dos banda mester follow up riba e problema y keda involucra] (Interviewee 11, personal communication, 9 April 2025). Another added that trust has to go both ways; the community must believe in the police, and the police must believe in the community (Interviewee 16, personal communication, 9 April 2025).

Furthermore, some officers said that respect is the basis of everything. One said simply that both the police and the community must respect each other [*Respet pa e comunidad... Respet pa e polis*] (Interviewee 14, personal communication, 8 April 2025). Others mentioned that too often, the community doesn't speak up, either out of fear or because they feel like nothing will change. In those cases, it's the officer's job to be approachable and open, so people feel comfortable sharing (Interviewee 12, personal communication, 8 April 2025). Police officers expect to play a guiding, protective, and community-focused role in the community policing approach. At the same time, they believe the community must also take responsibility by staying

informed, being active, and trusting the process. For this partnership to work, both sides must commit to communication, honesty, and mutual respect.

**Table 3.1**

*Expectations of Community Policing: Police Officers*

Themes	Expectations
Officer Role	Officers expect to be present, supportive, and trustworthy. Their role is to inform, guide, help, and educate the community. They also act as the “eyes and ears” of the neighborhood.
Honesty & Trust	Officers stress honesty; polis di bario should not make promises they cannot keep. Building trust requires consistent presence and respectful communication.
Community Role	The community should share responsibility by staying alert, reporting problems, and collaborating. Workshops and awareness programs are ways to engage residents.
Mutual Respect	Respect must go both ways: police must respect the community, and the community must respect the police. Without this, cooperation fails.
Foundation for Success	Success depends on communication, honesty, and shared responsibility. Trust is the foundation for true collaboration.

### ***5.3.2 Community Members' Expectations***

Community members shared their thoughts on what they believe the roles and responsibilities of both police officers and the community should be in a community policing approach. Most participants felt that officers need to be more present, respectful, and actively involved in neighborhood life, not just when there’s a problem. One person said simply that the police should take care of the issues in the community, like social problems and theft (Interviewee 1, personal communication, 14 March 2025), while another added that officers

should be visible and regularly conduct checks in the area to show that there is control and structure (Interviewee 2, personal communication, 11 March 2025).

Respect and trust came up often. Several participants emphasized that mutual respect is key to any real cooperation. One explained, “The police need to show respect to the community... then we will give it back with better communication” [Ora polis duna respet nos lo duna bek mas communication] (Interviewee 3, personal communication, 17 March 2025). Others pointed out that officers must know how to communicate properly, be fully in uniform, and act professionally so that people can take them seriously and feel safe [Polis mester cana full uniforma pa nos por tuma nan serio y sinti safe] (Interviewee 3, personal communication, 17 March 2025).

Participants also had ideas about the role of the community itself. Many agreed that community members should take responsibility too by cooperating with the police, reporting suspicious behavior, and being active in their own neighborhoods. One person shared that residents should form a team, like a neighborhood watch, where people can alert each other and work with the police: “The neighbors can alert each other, like in a group chat, and involve the police because they are the ones who should take action” [E bario por alerta otro manera den un groupchat y hinca e polis paso anan ta esnan cu lo mester tuma accion] (Interviewee 2, personal communication, 11 March 2025). Another participant added that the community must also “behave properly” [Anos mester comporta tambe] and support the efforts of the police (Interviewee 6, personal communication, 17 March 2025).

In terms of working together, most believed that cooperation can only succeed if there is good communication and mutual trust. “The community should report things, and the police must act, but there must be respect on both sides” [E comunidad mester reporta cos y e polis nan

mester actua pero e mester ta cu respect di ambos banda” (Interviewee 7, personal communication, 17 March 2025). A few respondents also mentioned that officers should listen to the community, not ignore them after making promises, because that only leads to more distrust (Interviewee 1, personal communication, 14 March 2025).

When asked about the kinds of programs the community likes to see as part of community policing, many suggested more frequent meetings, activities in the neighborhood, and better access to the police. One respondent said, “There should be an introduction program so the community knows what this is and who they can talk to if something happens in their street and also what is the difference between a polis di bario and a normal police” [Lo mester bin un programa di introduction pa e comunidad pa nos sa kico esaki ta y na ken nos mester bay pa por papia si algo pasa cu nos den bario y tambe e diferencia entre e polis di bario y e polis normal] (Interviewee 1, personal communication, 14 March 2025). Others proposed organizing more events with children and the police to help build stronger connections from a young age (Interviewee 7, personal communication, 17 March 2025). Overall, community members expect police officers to be visible, respectful, and genuinely interested in solving the real problems affecting their neighborhoods. At the same time, they understand that their role also matters; they need to participate, stay informed, and cooperate in a way that builds trust. For this to work, both sides must share responsibility and keep the communication open and honest.

**Table 3.2***Expectations of Community Policing: Community Members*

Themes	Expectations
Officer Role	Officers should be more visible and present daily, not just during crises. They should handle social problems, theft, and maintain structure in neighborhoods.
Professionalism	Officers should act respectfully, communicate well, wear full uniform, and behave professionally so residents feel safe and take them seriously.
Respect & Trust	Mutual respect is central. If police respect the community, residents will respond with cooperation and better communication.
Community Role	Community members should cooperate, report suspicious activity, and behave properly. They also suggest neighborhood teams or group chats to share information.
Programs & Activities	Community members want introduction programs to explain CP and clarify the difference with Polis di Barrio. They also suggest more meetings, activities in neighborhoods, and events with children to build ties.

#### **5.4 Internal Factors Affecting Implementation**

This subchapter outlines the internal factors that influence the potential implementation of community policing in Aruba, as perceived by both police officers and community members. The findings explore issues related to organizational structure, communication, leadership, training, and institutional readiness. These internal dynamics shed light on both the strengths and weaknesses within the police organization that may affect the adoption of community policing. The analysis in this section aligns with Sub-question 3 and is further supported by elements of

the SWOT analysis, focusing specifically on the strengths and weaknesses identified by the respondents.

#### ***5.4.1 Police Officers' Views on Internal Factors***

The internal factors identified by the police officers reflect various challenges and strengths within the organization that could impact the success of community policing in Aruba. One key internal factor highlighted was the need for ongoing and relevant training. Many officers expressed that while training is provided, it is not always delivered on a regular basis. One officer noted that training is often limited to specific individuals or departments, leading to gaps in knowledge and execution (Interviewee 9, personal communication, 9 April 2025). This inconsistency in training was seen as a significant challenge to achieving a uniform approach to community policing. Moreover, officers emphasized the importance of refresher courses, suggesting that training should occur at least annually to keep skills sharp and aligned with the evolving needs of the community. Beyond the need for training, officers highlighted the importance of the mindset within the police force. Some officers mentioned that not all of their colleagues view their role in community policing as a service-oriented responsibility. For some, it remains “just a job,” which limits their ability to build meaningful relationships within the community. One officer suggested that a change in mindset is crucial for the success of community policing: officers must see their role not only as law enforcers but also as community allies and problem-solvers (Interviewee 9, personal communication, 9 April 2025). This lack of commitment from some officers has the potential to undermine the effectiveness of the initiative.

Staffing and resource allocation were also mentioned as significant internal factors. Officers repeatedly noted that the force is understaffed, which limits their ability to maintain a consistent presence in the community. One officer pointed out, “We need at least five more

officers” [Nos mester sikiera 5 trahador mas] to ensure adequate coverage of the area and to engage with residents in a meaningful way (Interviewee 9, personal communication, 9 April 2025). The lack of sufficient personnel also forces officers to take on tasks outside of community policing, diluting their focus on this important area. Additionally, officers noted the need for better resources, such as more vehicles, local office spaces in neighborhoods, and better equipment to operate effectively. One officer stated, “Having a local office in the neighborhood that’s accessible even after regular hours would make it easier for residents to approach us” [Si nos tin un officina den bario nan cu ta accessible despues di ora nan di trabou cu ta hasie facil pa e residente aserca nos] (Interviewee 9, personal communication, 9 April 2025). In addition to staffing and resources, internal communication was another area of concern. Several officers mentioned that there is often a lack of clear communication between districts and departments, which can leave officers feeling isolated in their work. They expressed a desire for more coordination, such as shared meetings and opportunities to exchange ideas across districts. One officer emphasized that “being on our own island” makes it difficult to share experiences and lessons learned, which could improve the overall effectiveness of community policing efforts (Interviewee 9, personal communication, 9 April 2025).

Moreover, trust and relationship-building within the force were seen as crucial. Officers who had strong internal relationships with their colleagues reported better outcomes in their community policing efforts. One officer noted that “internal teamwork is key to ensuring that we can respond effectively” [Samenwerking intern ta e jabi pa nos por responde mas eficiente] and that consulting with fellow officers before taking action strengthens the quality of service provided to the community (Interviewee 10, personal communication, 10 April 2025). Many officers also mentioned that being familiar with the community and its residents was a key

strength, as it allows them to respond more quickly and personally to any issues that arise. Internal factors such as training, mindset, staffing, resources, communication, and trust among officers play a critical role in the implementation and success of community policing in Aruba. Addressing these internal challenges will require a concerted effort to invest in ongoing professional development, improve internal communication, and ensure that the right people with the right mindset are in the right roles to make community policing a sustainable and effective approach. The perspectives of police officers reveal both strengths and weaknesses within the organization that directly affect the implementation of community policing. These internal factors highlight the positive commitment of some officers but also point to gaps in training, mindset, and resources. Table 4.1 summarizes the main internal strengths and weaknesses described by the officers.

**Table 4.1**

*Internal Factors: Police Officers*

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many officers are motivated and open to introducing community policing in Aruba.</li> <li>• Officers show strong familiarity with their neighborhoods and residents, which helps them respond personally and quickly to local issues.</li> <li>• Internal teamwork and consultation among colleagues improve coordination and the quality of service.</li> <li>• A service-oriented mindset is already visible among some officers, who emphasize presence, approachability, and relationship-building.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training is inconsistent and often limited to specific officers; refresher and soft-skills training are lacking.</li> <li>• Staffing shortages restrict community presence, forcing officers to balance CP with other duties.</li> <li>• Resource limitations (vehicles, offices in neighborhoods, equipment) make it harder to stay accessible and effective.</li> <li>• Weak communication and coordination across districts and departments leave officers feeling isolated.</li> <li>• Some officers see polis di bario as “just an easy job,” limiting their commitment to a service-oriented approach.</li> </ul>

#### ***5.4.2 Community Members' Views on Internal Factors***

The internal factors affecting community policing from the perspective of community members primarily revolve around the level of engagement, communication, and trust. Many community members expressed concerns about the lack of consistent interaction with the police, which they feel is crucial for building trust and ensuring effective community policing. One participant mentioned, “I’ve never seen them again after their first visit” [Mino a wak nan mas despues cu nan a bin prome biaha] (Interviewee 2, personal communication, 11 March 2025), reflecting a sense of abandonment after initial engagements. This inconsistency in police presence was viewed as a significant weakness in the community policing approach.

Moreover, the community highlighted a need for increased cooperation and better communication from the police. One community member suggested that the police should be more cooperative with the residents, stating, “They need to work more closely with the community and listen to the people” [Nan mester torah mas di serca cu nos comunidad y scucha persona nan] (Interviewee 1, personal communication, 14 March 2025). For community policing to be successful, it is crucial that police officers actively engage and collaborate with the residents, rather than just performing their duties in isolation.

Additionally, many members expressed that fear of reprisal or lack of trust prevents them from reporting issues or engaging with the police. One person explained, “People are afraid to speak up because they don’t trust the police to help them” [Tin hende tin miedo pa papia paso nan no ta confia police pa yuda nan] (Interviewee 1, personal communication, 14 March 2025). This fear of retaliation can undermine the success of community policing, as it discourages open communication and cooperation from the community. There was also a strong sentiment that community members are willing to cooperate if they feel respected and understood by the police.

As one participant noted, “Cooperate with them, communicate and behave well, and don’t speak negatively about them” [Copera cu nan, comunica cu nan y comportabo mes bon y no papia negativo di nan] (Interviewee 1, personal communication, 14 March 2025). This suggests that internal factors, such as a more respectful approach to communication and stronger rapport-building between the police and community members, are essential to fostering trust and success in community policing. From the perspective of community members, the internal factors influencing community policing relate mainly to their experiences of interaction with officers. While many expressed willingness to cooperate, they also raised concerns about inconsistent presence and trust issues. These views illustrate how internal police practices are perceived from the outside, as shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2**

*Internal Factors: Community Members*

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members are willing to collaborate if officers are approachable and respectful.</li> <li>• Community members value cooperation, communication, and good behavior as a way to support policing efforts.</li> <li>• Some community members already show readiness to engage in respectful dialogue with officers.</li> <li>• There is openness to building trust if the police show consistency and understanding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited and inconsistent police presence leaves residents feeling abandoned after first contact.</li> <li>• Lack of clear communication and cooperation from officers reduces trust.</li> <li>• Fear of reprisal or lack of confidence prevents people from reporting problems.</li> <li>• Negative public image of the police, reinforced by past experiences and media coverage, sustains mistrust.</li> </ul>

## **5.5 External Factors Affecting Implementation**

This subchapter focuses on external factors that may support or hinder the implementation of community policing, based on the views of police officers and community members. These include community involvement, political and institutional support, public perception, and inter-agency collaboration. The section highlights how environmental conditions and external relationships can influence the success of the strategy. The discussion contributes to Sub-question 4 and incorporates components of the SWOT analysis, particularly the opportunities and threats that emerged during the data collection process.

### ***5.5.1 Police Officers' Views on External Factors***

The success of community policing in Aruba is significantly influenced by various external factors, many of which are beyond the control of the police force. A recurring theme among the officers was the impact of public perception and trust on the effectiveness of community policing. Officers emphasized that the public's perception of the police plays a crucial role in how community policing initiatives are received and how willing residents are to engage with law enforcement. One officer noted, "Trust is essential. The more trust we build, the more effective we become" [Confiansa ta esencial. Mas confiansa nos crea, mas eficiente nos ta bira] (Interviewee 9, personal communication, 9 April 2025). Conversely, public scandals involving the police can drastically damage this trust. When the community perceives police officers as dishonest or self-serving, they are less likely to cooperate, making it harder to implement community policing effectively. Officers also pointed out that even a single incident of misconduct can set back months of relationship-building and trust development (Interviewee 13, personal communication, 10 April 2025)

Another external factor that was identified as a challenge is the level of political and governmental support for community policing initiatives. Several officers noted that while political backing is not always essential for day-to-day policing, it plays a significant role in providing the necessary resources, funding, and infrastructure for community policing to thrive. One officer explained, "Government support is vital because they can assist in ways we cannot through funding for social programs or infrastructure improvements" [Apoyo di gobierno ta importante pasobra nan por yuda den maneranan cu nos no por a hasi trahando financiamiento pa programanan social of mehora infraestructur] (Interviewee 9, personal communication, 9 April 2025). Political backing ensures that community policing efforts are prioritized and well-funded, which in turn makes them more sustainable. Without such support, officers are often left to carry out these initiatives with limited resources, hindering their effectiveness. The role of local organizations, such as schools and businesses, was also highlighted as a critical external factor. Officers emphasized that strong collaboration with these organizations can significantly enhance the success of community policing. One officer stated that "schools and local businesses are essential partners because their involvement can provide valuable information and help maintain public order" (Interviewee 9, personal communication, 9 April 2025). However, the level of engagement from these organizations varies, with some areas having better cooperation than others. For example, while schools in Santa Cruz were described as strong collaborators, businesses in certain districts, such as San Nicolás, were less engaged, which made it harder to foster a collective effort to address community issues.

Additionally, societal challenges, such as youth behavior and social unrest, were identified as significant external factors that could impede the success of community policing. Officers reported that many young people, particularly in underprivileged areas, are left

unsupervised at home, leading to an increase in crime and disorder. One officer observed, "Youth are often influenced by peer pressure and lack the proper guidance, which leads to issues that we have to manage" [Hubentud mayoria bes ta ser influencia pa peer pressure y falta di guia] (Interviewee 10, personal communication, 10 April 2025). This highlights the need for a more comprehensive approach, including interventions from schools, parents, and community organizations, to address the root causes of youth-related crime and disorder.

The influence of the media was also cited as an external factor that can either support or hinder community policing efforts. Negative portrayals of the police in the media can severely damage public trust and complicate the efforts of officers to build rapport with the community. One officer explained, "The media can be a major challenge. Negative stories often spread quickly, and once that trust is broken, it's hard to regain" [Prensa ta un reto grandi. Storia nan negativo ta spaart hopi lihe y na e momento cu e confiansa kibra ta masha dificil pabo haye bek](Interviewee 10, personal communication, 10 April 2025). Officers expressed the need for more positive media coverage to highlight the good work being done in the community and to rebuild trust with residents. They also emphasized the importance of proactive communication from the police to ensure that the public receives accurate and balanced information.

Furthermore, the cultural diversity within Aruba was seen as an important external factor that affects community policing. Officers acknowledged that the community in Aruba is diverse, with people from various cultural backgrounds, which can lead to differing attitudes toward the police. One officer stated, "Cultural differences impact how people view us, and officers need to adapt their approach depending on who they are dealing with" (Interviewee 10, personal communication, 10 April 2025). Understanding and respecting these cultural differences is essential for building trust and effective communication with the community. Officers suggested

that more training on cultural sensitivity would be beneficial to help them engage more effectively with people from different backgrounds. External factors such as public perception, political support, collaboration with local organizations, societal challenges, media influence, and cultural diversity all play significant roles in the success of community policing in Aruba. Police officers also pointed to several external factors that shape the success of community policing. These include opportunities, such as political support and collaboration with schools and businesses, but also threats, such as misconduct, negative media coverage, and broader social challenges. Table 4.3 provides an overview of these opportunities and threats.

**Table 4.3**

*External Factors: Police Officers*

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community policing can be developed into a formal training module and strengthen long-term skills.</li> <li>• Building stronger trust with residents can enhance cooperation and effectiveness.</li> <li>• Political and governmental support can provide funding and resources for CP initiatives.</li> <li>• Collaboration with schools, businesses, and ketenpartners can improve outreach and long-term problem-solving.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of mindset change and organizational support may leave CP unsustainable.</li> <li>• Scandals, misconduct, or abuse of power can quickly erode public trust.</li> <li>• Negative media coverage spreads rapidly, damaging police-community relations.</li> <li>• Broader societal issues (youth behavior, social unrest) increase workload and limit CP success.</li> </ul>

**5.5.2 Community Members' Views on External Factors**

The external factors influencing the success of community policing, according to community members, involve several social and cultural dynamics that play a significant role in shaping the overall effectiveness of policing efforts. One of the key external factors mentioned is the level of political and governmental support for community policing. Many respondents

indicated that political support is crucial for the success of the initiative, with one participant noting, “The government needs to provide more resources, such as more police officers and better equipment, to make it work” (Interviewee 8, personal communication, 14 March 2025).

The role of local organizations, especially schools and businesses, was also identified as an important external factor. Community members emphasized that schools could help by educating young people about the importance of respecting the police and being active participants in maintaining safety. One community member suggested, “Schools can help by educating children and encouraging them to respect the police” [Scol nan por yuda pa educa mucha nan y encurasha nan pa nan respeta polis] (Interviewee 2, personal communication, 11 March 2025). This highlights the opportunity to engage the younger generation and foster positive relationships with law enforcement from an early age.

However, external threats were also highlighted, particularly concerning the potential for public mistrust and the abuse of police power. A recurring concern among community members was the lack of trust in the police, which could be exacerbated by negative media portrayals or misconduct. One respondent explained, “If the police abuse their power, they will lose the trust of the people, and that will destroy not only the community policing but the whole image of police officers themselves” [Si e polis nan hasi abuso di nan poder, nan no lo solamente danja community policing pero lo danja e imagen di e cuerpo policial mes] (Interviewee 8, personal communication, 14 March 2025). Public scandals or instances of police misconduct can create a significant barrier to effective community policing, as these incidents contribute to mistrust and reluctance to engage with law enforcement.

Furthermore, societal issues such as crime, economic instability, and social inequality were cited as external challenges that could hinder the success of community policing. Some

community members pointed out that poverty and unemployment in certain neighborhoods lead to higher crime rates, making it more difficult for police to establish a positive presence. One participant noted, “People who are struggling financially may not worry about the law, which makes it harder for the police to do their job” (Interviewee 8, personal communication, 14 March 2025). These underlying social challenges must be addressed in tandem with community policing efforts to ensure long-term success. The success of community policing in Aruba is shaped by both external factors, such as government support, collaboration with local organizations, and societal challenges. Addressing issues of trust, ensuring adequate resources, and tackling social inequality are essential to building a strong foundation for community policing.

In this chapter, the gathered results from interviews with both police officers and community members were analyzed using a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. This method allows for a clearer understanding of the internal and external factors that influence the success of community policing in Aruba. The perspectives of both the police officers and community members were crucial in identifying key factors affecting the implementation and effectiveness of community policing. Community members identified external factors that either support or hinder community policing, particularly government involvement, cooperation with schools, and the role of media. They also emphasized threats such as poverty, mistrust, and the potential abuse of power by police. These perspectives are summarized in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4** *External Factors: Community Members*

<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthening police visibility and communication can rebuild confidence and relationships.</li><li>• Political and governmental support can ensure more officers, better equipment, and resources.</li><li>• Schools can educate children to respect police and encourage positive engagement.</li><li>• Community cooperation and involvement can help prevent crime and support CP initiatives.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abuse of police power or misconduct can destroy community trust.</li><li>• Negative media portrayals reinforce mistrust and discourage cooperation.</li><li>• Poverty and unemployment contribute to higher crime and social problems.</li><li>• Persistent mistrust and lack of involvement risk widening the gap between the police and the community.</li></ul>

## **6. Discussion**

This chapter analyzes and interprets the findings from this study in relation to the research questions and the reviewed literature. By exploring the perceptions, expectations, and key factors influencing the implementation of community policing in Aruba, the discussion aims to highlight both the opportunities and the challenges that must be addressed to move forward. The discussion is framed around the core themes emerging from the interviews and supported by relevant academic sources.

### **6.1 Community Policing**

This study revealed a clear gap in how community policing is perceived by police officers compared to community members in Aruba. While police officers generally see community policing as a proactive, trust-building strategy aligned with international literature (Abiloye et al., 2023; Office of Justice Programs, 1994), many community members confuse it with routine patrolling or the existing Polis di Bario model. This reflects a disconnect in communication and understanding, highlighting the need for targeted public education on what community policing truly entails. As noted in the conceptual framework, successful implementation of community policing depends not only on institutional readiness but also on shared understanding and engagement at the community level. Gbenemene and Adishi (2017) stress the importance of clearly distinguishing community policing from traditional enforcement, positioning it as a collaborative, community-led process. Similarly, Bryman (2021) underlines that participatory strategies require all stakeholders to understand both their purpose and their roles within the approach. In Aruba's case, the lack of public clarity suggests that the foundational step of awareness-building has not been fully addressed. This is especially critical considering that the conceptual framework outlines community awareness and empowerment as

key external factors influencing implementation success. When community members are unaware or unsure about what community policing involves, they are less likely to participate or engage meaningfully. To move forward, awareness campaigns using simple language, relatable examples, and real-life success stories should be developed. These campaigns can help differentiate community policing from traditional enforcement models that were more reactive and enforcement-driven. For example, as seen in the Dutch case, the shift from basic law enforcement to neighborhood-based policing emphasized proactive engagement, citizen participation, and integrated social support (Van Sluis et al., 2010). Similarly, the literature highlights how earlier models often focused on control and punishment, while community policing aims for partnership and prevention (Office of Justice Programs, 1994; Gbenemene & Adishi, 2017). These distinctions must be clearly communicated in Aruba to ensure public understanding and encourage community involvement.

## **6.2 Expectations of Roles in Community Policing**

The findings also revealed a strong desire for collaborative relationships, though expectations varied between police officers and community members. Police officers expressed that they need the community to play an active role in providing information, attending meetings, and helping identify concerns. As one officer shared, “We want the community to trust us and work with us, not against us” (Interviewee #3, personal communication, 13 March, 2025).

Meanwhile, community members expected police officers to be more present, respectful, and responsive. One participant explained, “Sometimes the police don't come when we call, or they come but don't explain anything. It feels like they don't care” (Interviewee #10, personal communication, 14 March, 2025). Another participant shared a similar perception: “if they want us to help, they have to show us that they care first. We hardly see them unless something bad

happens” (Interviewee #13, personal communication, 15 March, 2025). These responses reflect a consistent perception that the police are distant or disengaged, which discourages community members from taking initiative in building relationships or reporting concerns. This mismatch in expectations reflects what Denney and Jenkins (2013) describe as the danger of unbalanced partnerships when citizens expect more from authorities than they receive, or when authorities expect public cooperation without first earning trust. The Office of Justice Programs (1994) similarly notes that effective community policing requires a visible, consistent, and communicative police presence that builds confidence over time.

Participants also raised concerns about feeling excluded from safety decisions. As one community member noted, “they make plans without asking us what we need or see in our neighborhood” (Interviewee #11, personal communication, 14 March, 2025). This disconnect reinforces the notion that when citizens are treated as passive recipients of police services rather than as active partners, collaboration breaks down. According to Hargreaves (n.d.), stakeholder involvement must be genuine and inclusive in order to build the kind of long-term cooperation needed for community safety initiatives to succeed.

Conversely, police officers expressed frustration that community members often remain distant or disengaged. One officer remarked, “We organize meetings and sometimes no one shows up. It’s like they only call us when something is wrong” (Interviewee #6, personal communication, 13 March, 2025). This frustration speaks to another common challenge in the literature: when community policing is implemented without parallel investment in public awareness and relationship-building, engagement tends to be inconsistent (Denney & Jenkins, 2013; Mandeza, 2023).

The literature emphasizes that role clarity is essential for the effective implementation of community policing (Denney & Jenkins, 2013; Office of Justice Programs, 1994). Both police and citizens must understand not only what is expected of them, but also what they can expect in return. When roles are undefined or poorly communicated, disappointment and disengagement are likely. As Gbenemene and Adishi (2017) argue, clear definitions of roles and responsibilities are foundational for trust to grow between law enforcement and community members. Therefore, for Aruba to implement community policing effectively, mutual expectations must be clearly outlined and continuously reinforced through dialogue, consistent communication, and collaborative activities.

### **6.3 Internal Factors Influencing Implementation**

The implementation of community policing in Aruba is shaped not only by community readiness but also by the internal dynamics within the police organization. Interviews with officers revealed that while there is openness and motivation to engage in community-oriented work, several organizational barriers hinder its consistent implementation. These factors align with the conceptual framework, which highlights training and skills, leadership and accountability, organizational culture, resources, and ethical policing and integrity as critical internal elements that influence the success of community policing.

#### ***6.3.1 Training and Skills Development***

Although officers acknowledged that training initiatives have been introduced over the past two years, many emphasized that these sessions are limited to certain groups, often just the Polis di Bario. One officer pointed out, “Yes, some of us have had training, but it’s not for everyone. The rest of the force is left out” (Interviewee #4, personal communication, 13 March, 2025). Another noted, “Even those who do get training don’t always get follow-up or refreshers.

It needs to be more consistent and for the whole police force” (Interviewee #5, personal communication, 13 March, 2025).

This concern is well-documented in the literature. Mastroski et al. (2007) argue that successful community policing requires a deep shift in police culture, one that cannot occur without adequate internal preparation. Officers need more than procedural knowledge; they need support in developing communication skills, empathy, and strategies for long-term engagement with the public. Patterson (2007) similarly warns that without careful planning and skill-building, community policing efforts can become superficial and fail to create meaningful change.

### ***6.3.2 Leadership, Internal Coordination, and Accountability***

In addition to training, several officers described feeling disconnected within their own departments. “There’s no clear plan,” said one, “some of us believe in it, but others don’t, and nothing is coordinated” (Interviewee #5, personal communication, 13 March, 2025). Another added, “Sometimes you get support, sometimes you don’t. It depends who is in charge that day” (Interviewee #6, personal communication, 13 March, 2025). This inconsistent leadership support reflects what Van Sluis et al. (2010) describe as a common internal barrier: without a clear structure and unified leadership commitment, implementation becomes fragmented. Officers may start with good intentions, but lose momentum when the direction isn’t clear or support varies from one supervisor to the next. The literature also points out the importance of leaders who believe in the mission and are actively involved in guiding and motivating their teams. Denney and Jenkins (2013) emphasize that successful community policing often relies on motivated and supported officers who can bring others together and keep the process moving forward. Beyond leadership, accountability mechanisms are also essential. Officers in Aruba highlighted that without clear accountability, responsibilities become blurred, and performance is difficult to

measure. As noted in the conceptual framework, leadership and accountability must go hand in hand: effective leaders not only provide guidance but also ensure that officers are held responsible for maintaining standards of consistency, coordination, and service to the community. This reflects Denney and Jenkins (2013), who emphasize that weak accountability structures undermine the effectiveness of community policing and limit its sustainability.

### ***6.3.3 Staffing and Material Shortages***

A major concern raised during the interviews was the ongoing shortage of police officers and the lack of basic resources needed to carry out community policing effectively. Officers shared that they are often stretched thin, balancing traditional duties with the added responsibility of engaging with the community. As one officer explained, “We want to be more visible in the community, but there simply aren’t enough of us” (Interviewee #7, personal communication, 13 March, 2025). Another added, “We’re expected to connect with people, follow up, and respond quickly, but without the staff or resources, it’s almost impossible” (Interviewee #3, personal communication, 13 March, 2025).

One of the unintended consequences of this shortage is that Polis di Bario are often pulled away from their community-building roles to cover regular shifts or assist with arrests, even within the very neighborhoods they are assigned to support. Officers explained that this creates a difficult situation: being forced to arrest or fine people from their own districts damages the trust they are trying to build. As one participant put it, “You’re trying to build something with these people, and then next thing you’re arresting them. That doesn’t help” (Interviewee #6, personal communication, 13 March, 2025).

This dilemma reflects what Denney and Jenkins (2013) describe as the risk of “role conflict” in community policing. When officers are expected to fulfill both enforcement and

engagement duties without clear separation or adequate support, communities may grow confused or feel betrayed. This undermines the long-term trust that community policing depends on. Community members confirmed these concerns. One participant remarked, “You can tell the police want to help, but they don’t have what they need. Sometimes they show up late, or not at all, and it’s not their fault” (Interviewee #10, personal communication, 14 March, 2025).

The literature reinforces that sustainable community policing requires more than goodwill. It needs investment in staffing, logistics, and long-term planning. As Mastrofski et al. (2007) emphasize, when police departments are under-resourced, even well-intentioned officers are often forced to fall back on reactive, traditional methods simply to keep up. Without dedicated personnel, sufficient materials, and strategic support, community policing risks becoming fragmented and ineffective. This directly connects to the resources element in the conceptual framework, which identifies adequate staffing, logistical support, and infrastructure as key internal factors for the successful implementation of community policing.

#### ***6.3.4 Organizational Culture and Mindset***

The interviews also revealed a deeper issue related to organizational mindset. Some officers mentioned that within the broader police force, Polis di Barrio is still seen as separate or “less serious” than other divisions. As one officer explained, “Some people in the force still see Polis di Barrio like it’s not real police work. That needs to change” (Interviewee #6, personal communication, 13 March 2025). Such perspectives affect morale and make it harder for community policing to be recognized as a professional and respected part of policing.

As Denney and Jenkins (2013) argue, community policing must be embedded into the daily culture of the organization rather than treated as a side project or optional duty. It needs to be seen as an essential strategy for improving public safety, building trust, and strengthening

long-term relationships with the community. For this to happen, leadership must reinforce its value, support officers who engage in this work, and challenge the perception that community engagement is secondary. If internal support remains weak or inconsistent, even officers who believe in community policing may default to more traditional approaches.

True change requires more than motivation. It depends on regular training, clear communication, and leadership that backs up its message with consistent action. Community policing must become part of the force's identity, not just a task assigned to a few individuals. Achieving a community-centered police force in Aruba will therefore require a fundamental mindset shift alongside stronger internal alignment. This connects directly to the conceptual framework, where organizational culture, leadership, accountability, and integrity are identified as critical internal elements. Only by embedding these values into daily practice can community policing move from intention to lasting impact

## **7. Conclusion & Recommendation**

This chapter concludes the study by answering the main research question:

What strategies can the Korps Politie Aruba (KPA) use to successfully implement community policing? It brings together the insights gained from the 16 semi-structured interviews with police officers and community members, connects them to the conceptual framework, and translates them into practical recommendations. In doing so, it highlights both the internal and external factors, as well as the stakeholders and desired outcomes, that are central to community policing. The chapter ends with reflections on the strengths and limitations of this study, suggestions for future research, and a personal reflection on the research journey.

### **7.1 Conclusion**

This qualitative research set out to explore what strategies the Korps Politie Aruba (KPA) can use to successfully implement community policing, focusing on building peaceful and inclusive communities, improving safety, and helping maintain low levels of criminality on the island. Through 16 interviews with both police officers and community members from four districts and using the conceptual framework as a guide, the findings were examined through four dimensions: internal factors, external factors, stakeholders, and outcomes.. The study identified a number of insights and challenges that help answer this main research question.

First, the findings revealed that community policing is generally seen as a step in the right direction. Police officers, having received training in recent years, showed a clear understanding of what community policing involves and why it matters. However, they also pointed out that despite this progress, the approach still lacks a consistent structure and support across the whole force. On the other hand, community members often confused community policing with previous initiatives like Polis di Bario, and many were unsure of what the new model truly stands for. This

suggests that while internal understanding has grown within the Aruban police force, there is still a need for stronger and structured internal public education and clearer communication and collaboration to align everyone's expectations and build lasting partnerships.

When it comes to expectations of roles, police officers expect community members to participate more actively by reporting issues, attending meetings, and collaborating in prevention efforts. Community members, in contrast, expect officers to be visible, respectful, and professional. This mismatch reflects the literature's warning (Denney & Jenkins, 2013) that partnerships fail when expectations are unbalanced or unclear. It also points to the need for role clarification, an aspect emphasized in the conceptual framework under strategies for collaboration and empowerment.

Looking at internal factors, the study found progress through recent training efforts and leadership support. However, challenges remain in terms of staffing shortages, lack of equipment, and inconsistent coordination between departments. Some officers reported that Polis di Bario is still perceived internally as "less serious" police work, which undermines morale and recognition. These findings align with the framework's call for stronger training and skills development, leadership and accountability, organizational culture, and resources. Without strengthening these internal dimensions, implementation risks will remain fragmented.

In terms of external factors, trust in the police was repeatedly described as fragile. The February 2025 shooting incident and the way it was reported in the media deepened doubts, showing how a single event can quickly shape public perception. At the same time, many residents stressed that visibility, respectful engagement, and transparent communication can help rebuild trust. This highlights the importance of community engagement, political support, and accurate communication as outlined in the framework.

Finally, while this study focused primarily on police officers and community members, the framework also identifies other critical stakeholders, such as schools, local government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and businesses. These groups were not directly interviewed in this study but play essential roles. Schools and educators interact daily with youth, local government provides funding and policy direction, NGOs connect with vulnerable populations, and businesses experience public safety concerns firsthand. Future strategies for community policing in Aruba must therefore extend collaboration to these stakeholders to achieve the desired outcomes of trust, safety, crime prevention, and collaboration.

Overall, the findings confirm that Aruba is in the early stages of developing community policing. There is openness to change within the police force and a willingness among the public to engage, but without consistent internal support and broader external partnerships, progress will remain limited. For community policing to succeed, it must move beyond isolated projects and become part of the KPA's organizational identity and the community's daily life.

This study concludes that the Korps Politie Aruba can successfully implement community policing by focusing on strategies that build trust and cooperation with society. The findings show that clear role definitions, strong leadership, consistent training, and community engagement are the most important elements for success. These strategies ensure that community policing is not an isolated project but part of the daily identity of the organization. By embedding this approach into practice, KPA can improve safety, strengthen democratic values, and foster social cohesion in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16. In this way, the main research question is answered: community policing in Aruba can only succeed through a combined effort of the police and community, supported by leadership, resources, and a shared commitment to a safer and more resilient society.

## **7.2 Recommendations**

To ensure the successful implementation of community policing in Aruba, several key actions should be prioritized. These recommendations build on the study's findings and are closely tied to the conceptual framework, which highlights both internal and external factors as essential for success. Internal factors include training, leadership, organizational culture, resources, and accountability, while external factors involve community engagement, media influence, and collaboration with local stakeholders. Together, these elements form a roadmap for strengthening the police force and fostering stronger connections with the community.

### ***Invest in Human and Material Resources***

A recurring concern among officers was the shortage of staff and resources. Without adequate personnel, vehicles, and communication tools, even the most committed officers struggle to fulfill their role in the community. Investing in these resources would allow officers, particularly Polis di Barrio, to stay focused on building trust and relationships rather than being redirected to emergency or enforcement duties. Stronger collaboration with the local government is essential here, as budget allocation and policy decisions directly affect how well community policing can be sustained.

### ***Expand and Standardize Training***

Community policing training has already been provided and has been valuable for the Polis di Barrio officers who received it. However, for the approach to succeed, training should be extended to the entire corps. This ensures that every officer has the skills to communicate effectively with residents and understands the purpose of community policing. Training must also be consistent over time, with refresher sessions to reinforce knowledge and keep the whole

organization aligned. As supported by Mastrofski et al. (2007), training across the entire force ensures culture change and consistency.

### ***Clarify Roles and Expectations***

The research showed that many community members are unfamiliar with what community policing truly means and often confuse it with traditional policing. Internally, officers also reported mixed interpretations. To address this, the police should develop clear guidelines and public campaigns that explain the concept of community policing, its goals, and the roles expected from both officers and community members. Clarifying these roles will reduce confusion, strengthen cooperation, and help both sides understand how they can work together effectively. This aligns with Denney and Jenkins (2013) and Gbenemene and Adishi (2017), who stress that role clarity is essential to avoid mismatched expectations and to build trust in community policing partnerships.

### ***Strengthen Leadership and Accountability***

The findings suggest that leadership plays a crucial role in shaping how community policing is perceived and practiced. Officers need consistent encouragement, guidance, and support from their superiors, not just during special projects but as part of everyday operations. Leaders who believe in the approach should be empowered to mentor others, set clear expectations, and foster a culture where accountability is central. In practice, this means ensuring that responsibilities are clearly defined, performance is monitored fairly, and officers are held responsible for maintaining consistency and service standards.

In addition, more attention should be given to the selection and placement of officers in community policing roles. Several participants expressed that this work requires individuals who are naturally approachable, communicative, and willing to build relationships—not just those

assigned out of obligation. Community policing works best when the people involved are genuinely motivated and have the personality and mindset to engage with others. Choosing the right people for these roles can significantly strengthen the overall impact and credibility of the initiative. This reflects Van Sluis et al. (2010), who note that leadership commitment and accountability are crucial for sustaining community policing.

### ***Deepen Community Engagement***

While community members expressed a willingness to collaborate, many felt excluded or uninformed. Regular community meetings, listening sessions, and joint activities should be established to encourage participation and build mutual trust. Engagement should be proactive, not reactive, and must reach diverse groups within the community, including youth, elders, and underrepresented voices.

In addition, as highlighted in the conceptual framework, strengthening contact with key stakeholders such as schools, NGOs, and local businesses is essential. These partners can support long-term safety goals through prevention, education, and social initiatives that go beyond the role of the police alone. Building structured partnerships with these groups will help create a stronger, more sustainable foundation for community policing in Aruba. This resonates with Gbenemene and Adishi (2017), who emphasize that collaboration with community actors is fundamental to sustaining participatory policing efforts.

### ***Embed Community Policing into Organizational Culture***

Community policing should not be treated as a side initiative or temporary project; it must become part of the police force's identity. This requires aligning policies, performance evaluations, and daily practices with the values of respect, trust-building, and partnership. Changing organizational culture also means challenging the perception that community policing

is “less serious” work. When community engagement is fully recognized as essential police work, officers will feel more motivated and supported, and the model will gain long-term credibility. As Denney and Jenkins (2013) argue, embedding community policing into organizational culture is key to moving from fragmented initiatives to a sustainable policing strategy.

### **7.3 Strengths and Limitations**

Every research project comes with its own set of strengths and limitations. Acknowledging both is essential for understanding the study’s credibility and the scope of its findings. This section outlines what aspects of the research contributed to its success and where there is still room for improvement.

#### ***Strengths***

One strength of this research lies in its inclusion of two key stakeholder groups: police officers and community members. This dual perspective provided a richer understanding of the issues at hand and allowed for deeper comparison between the expectations and realities of both groups. The use of semi-structured interviews also allowed participants to speak freely, offering authentic and valuable insights.

#### ***Limitations***

This study was limited by the number and type of participants, especially within the police force. While the interviews with eight community members provided consistent and meaningful insights, many of whom shared similar views the responses from police officers were more varied and revealed a broader range of experiences. Although this variety added depth to the findings, including more officers might have allowed for stronger comparisons or additional patterns. However, given the limited number of officers currently assigned to Polis di Bario, and

the overall staffing challenges in the force, it was not feasible to expand the sample further at this time.

Another limitation is that the study focused only on frontline officers and community members. While this gave a clear view of how community policing is experienced on the ground, the perspectives of police leadership, management, and other stakeholders noted in the conceptual framework, such as schools, NGOs, businesses, and government representatives, were not included. Their input could provide valuable context in future studies, particularly for understanding organizational strategy, resourcing decisions, and long-term planning for community policing.

#### **7.4 Future Studies**

The sample size could be increased in future studies to include a wider range of stakeholders, including representatives from the local government, schools, and businesses. Every one of these groups has a distinct and significant impact on how community safety is shaped. Support from local government representatives can have a direct impact on how community policing is funded and maintained because they are frequently in charge of collaboration among agencies, budget distribution, and public policy. Principals, advisors, and other school officials have daily interactions with young people and can offer important insights on the ways that policing impacts both the school environment and young people. In order to comprehend early intervention and preventive strategies, their viewpoint is particularly crucial. In contrast, business owners play a crucial role in a community's social and economic life. They may have helpful suggestions about how police presence and community involvement might enhance the local environment for both residents and business, as they frequently witness the effects of public safety firsthand through theft, vandalism, or loitering. A more comprehensive,

multifaceted understanding of how community policing can be carried out successfully and cooperatively in Aruba would result from including these voices. A longitudinal study could also track the long-term impact of community policing initiatives, particularly as more training and reforms are implemented. Lastly, comparative studies with other Caribbean islands could offer valuable insights into different models and strategies for community policing in similar contexts.

### **7.5 Personal Reflection**

Working on this thesis has been a deeply personal and eye-opening experience. Engaging directly with both police officers and community members allowed me to see the complexities of public safety through different lenses. I was especially moved by the honesty of the officers who shared their frustrations, hopes, and appreciation for the progress that's been made. It was clear that many of them feel grateful for the training opportunities they've received in recent years and the support of the Korpschef, which they credit for the positive changes they've experienced in so many years.

At the same time, I also witnessed how much more work still needs to be done. The trust between police and community is fragile, and lasting change requires patience, commitment, and collaboration. This journey has strengthened my belief in the importance of inclusive, community-based approaches to public safety. I feel proud to contribute to this conversation and hopeful that this research can serve as a small step toward a more connected and caring Aruba.

Looking back on the process, I also learned valuable lessons about conducting research itself. If I were to do it again, I would consider broadening the group of participants earlier in the study, so that perspectives from leadership and other stakeholders could complement those of frontline officers and community members. I also realized the importance of narrowing the focus at times, as balancing depth with scope is always a challenge in qualitative research. These

lessons have not only improved my understanding of community policing but also strengthened my skills as a researcher, and I will carry them with me in future projects.

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## Appendix A: Interview Guide



1

### Interview Guide

Facultad di Arte y Ciencia  
Organization, Governance, and Management  
Participants: Community Members

#### Demographic Questions

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age?
3. How many years have you been living in this district?
4. How would you describe your role in the community? (e.g., resident, business owner, community leader, etc.)

#### Perception of Community Policing

1. What do you know about community policing?
2. What does community policing mean to you?
3. How do you feel about the police presence in your community currently?
4. How do you think the community will respond to this new approach?
5. How does the community currently see the police, in your opinion?
6. What are the biggest safety concerns in your community?

#### Expectations of Roles in Community Policing

1. What role do you think police officers should have in community policing?
2. What role do you think the community should play in this approach?
3. How do you think working with the police will affect your daily life?
4. What kind of initiatives or programs would you like to see as part of community policing?
5. How do you think responsibilities can be shared between the police and the community?

#### Strengths of Community Policing

1. What aspects of current policing (Polis di Barrio) do you think work well in your community?
2. Have you witnessed or experienced successful interactions between the police and the community? If so, can you describe them?
3. What are the key benefits you see in implementing community policing in Aruba?
4. How do you think community policing could enhance safety and security?
5. What strengths do you believe the community already has that could contribute to this approach?



**Opportunities for Community Policing**

- 16. How can local organizations, like schools or businesses, help with community policing?
- 17. How important do you think government or political support is for this change?
- 18. What community resources or programs could support community policing efforts?

**Weaknesses in Community Policing Implementation**

- 18. What challenges do you think the police might face in making community policing successful?
- 19. What changes do you think are needed in police practices to build better relationships with the community?
- 20. What challenges exist within the community that could impact the success of community policing?

**Threats to Community Policing**

- 23. How do you think the level of trust between the police and the community will affect this approach?
- 24. What role does the local culture play in the community's response to community policing?
- 25. What challenges outside the police (e.g., crime, economy, social issues) could make it harder to implement community policing?
- 26. What are the threats that could make community policing unsuccessful?
- 27. What can you, as a community member, do to make this approach more successful?
- 28. What can the police do better to work more effectively with the community?



## **Interview Guide**

Facultad di Arte y Ciencia  
Organization, Governance, and Management  
Participants: Police Officers

### **Demographic Questions**

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age?
3. How many years have you been a police officer?
4. How many years have you been in service overall?
5. How many years have you been serving in this district?
6. What is your current position in the police force?

### **Perception of Community Policing**

7. What do you know about community policing?
8. What does community policing mean to you?
9. How do you feel the community will respond to this new approach?
10. How does the community currently see the police?

### **Expectations of Roles in Community Policing**

11. What role do you think police officers should have in community policing?
12. What role do you think the community should play in this approach?
13. How do you think community policing could change your work?
14. How do you think working with the community will affect your daily tasks?
15. What do you expect from your leadership to support this new approach?
16. How do you think responsibilities can be shared between police officers and the community?

### **Strengths of Community Policing**

17. What aspects of current policing (Polis di Bario) do you think work well in your community?
18. What successful community-police interactions have you witnessed or experienced?
19. What are the key benefits you see in implementing community policing in Aruba?
20. How do you think community policing could enhance safety and security?
21. What strengths do you believe the police force already has that could contribute to this approach?

### **Opportunities for Community Policing**

22. How can local organizations, like schools or businesses, help with community policing?
23. How important do you think government or political support is for this change?



**Weaknesses in Community Policing Implementation**

24. Do you feel that you've received enough training to work with the community in this way?
25. What changes do you think are needed within the police force to make community policing successful?
26. How supportive do you think leadership is of this transition?
27. What resources (like staff or equipment) do you think are needed to make this work?
28. What challenges do you see within the police organization for this change?

**Threats to Community Policing**

29. How do you think the level of trust between the police and the community will affect this approach?
30. What role does the local culture play in the community's response?
31. What challenges outside the police (e.g., in the community or society) could make it harder to implement?
32. What are the threats that can make community policing unsuccessful?
33. What can you, as a Police Officer (Korps Politie Aruba), do to improve the community's situation?
34. What can the community do better?

## Appendix B: Consent Form



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### Research Consent Form

Faculty of Arts and Science  
Organization, Governance & Management

#### Part I: Research Information

##### Introduction

My name is Emy Laclé, and I am a fourth-year student at the University of Aruba, enrolled in the Organization, Governance, and Management bachelor program. I would like to invite you to participate in my final thesis research, which explores the perceptions and expectations of community members and police officers of the Korps Politie Aruba (KPA) regarding the introduction of community policing in Aruba.

Community policing is a collaborative effort between KPA and community members to identify and solve issues related to public safety. Its goal is to build trust, enhance communication, and create a safer environment for all. This research involves both community members and police officers in the four districts to better understand how this strategy can be successfully implemented.

Before deciding whether to participate, you are encouraged to discuss this research with anyone you feel comfortable with. If you have any questions during or after the research, you can reach out to me for further clarification.

##### Purpose of the research

The purpose of this study is to understand how community members and police officers in Aruba perceive the aim and implementation of community policing, as well as to identify the internal and external factors that may influence its success. The research findings will help propose strategies for a successful implementation of community policing in Aruba.

##### Participant Selection

You have been selected to participate in this research because you are either a community member residing in one of Aruba's four districts or a police officer actively working within one of these districts. Your insights are essential to understanding the dynamics and expectations surrounding community policing.

**Voluntary Participation**

You may choose to participate or not in this research, therefore your participation is voluntary. Whatever choice you make, I will respect and honor your decision.

**Confidentiality**

As the researcher, I will maintain strict confidentiality regarding information about you and the information you share during this study. Any data related to you will be anonymized by assigning a unique number instead of using your name. Only the researchers will have access to the key that links your name to the corresponding number. Any confidential information or documents provided to the researchers will be securely discarded once they have served their purpose in the research and will not be shared or discussed with anyone.

Additionally, with your consent, I would like to record this interview to facilitate the analysis of the information gathered. These recordings will be used solely for analysis purposes and will be permanently deleted once the research is completed.

**Sharing the Results**

Your identity will not be linked to the information you provide. The role of the researchers is to maintain confidentiality and anonymity regarding information about the participant and the information that the participant shares by safeguarding all recordings and notes. The insights gained from this research will be shared with my instructors and, with your permission, may also be shared with relevant institutions to contribute to a broader understanding of this subject.

**Right to Refuse or Withdraw**

You have the freedom to discontinue your involvement in the discussion/interview at any time without any repercussions. Additionally, if you share information that you later decide should not be included in my findings, you can request its removal, and I will willingly comply.



**Part II: Certificate of Consent**

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to participate in this study.

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Day/month/year

Statement by the researcher taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands the nature of this research, the use of data, the confidentiality measures, and the availability of the results.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Name of Researcher taking the consent: Emy Laclé

Signature of Researcher taking the consent \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Day/month/year