

Impact of Civic Education on Community Policing Success in Lusaka District of Zambia

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Abstract: This study examines civic education's role in strengthening community policing in Lusaka District, Zambia, via a desk-based systematic review of scholarly and policy literature. Using a framework linking civic education to rights awareness, community participation, and crime-prevention outcomes, the review synthesises global, regional, and local evidence. Findings indicate that civic education improves knowledge of constitutional rights and reporting mechanisms, reduces tolerance for mob justice, and encourages engagement in policing forums and neighborhood patrols, though sustainability is constrained by low incentives and uneven police responsiveness. Its impact on crime reporting and information-sharing depends on trust in law enforcement and complainant protection. Persistent challenges include limited coverage, short funding cycles, literacy barriers, and weak coordination. Civic education is necessary but insufficient for effective community policing, highlighting the need for broader reforms to strengthen police legitimacy and community trust.

1. BACKGROUND

Globally, community policing has evolved from narrow law-enforcement approaches to broader partnership models that emphasize trust, legitimacy, and co-production of safety. Civic education the process of building citizens' knowledge, skills, and values for democratic participation has emerged as a key enabler of this shift. By raising awareness of rights and responsibilities and strengthening confidence to engage with state institutions, civic education empowers citizens to participate meaningfully in policing forums, report crime, and hold authorities accountable (OSCE, 2014; UNODC, 2011). This linkage is reflected in global policy frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goal 16, which stresses inclusive decision-making, accountability, access to information, and non-discriminatory laws as pathways to safer societies (UN, 2015). Evidence shows that when citizens understand due process and complaint mechanisms, joint problem-solving with police improves, reporting of victimisation rises, and fear of crime declines (Bayley, 2006; Skogan, 2006).

Across Africa, police reforms have increasingly sought to embed service-oriented and community-driven practices. The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (AU, 2007) commits states to civic education as a foundation for constitutionalism, human rights, and citizen participation, while Agenda 2063 identifies civic literacy as a prerequisite for peace and security. Civil society organisations, faith groups, and media outlets have played prominent roles in teaching communities about arrest rights, pre-trial safeguards, and reporting pathways. Studies in African cities highlight that civic education enhances citizens' ability to navigate policing structures, improves willingness to report crimes, and reduces vigilantism by redirecting collective action towards lawful prevention (Baker, 2008; Hills, 2014). Regional frameworks such as SADC's Strategic Indicative Plan for Politics, Defence and Security further emphasise information-sharing and community mobilisation, with civic education positioned as a cross-cutting enabler (SADC, 2010).

In Zambia, community policing has been promoted as a cornerstone of crime prevention since the early 2000s. National policy emphasises human rights, rule of law, and participatory governance, with civic education interventions delivered through schools, NGOs, churches, and the media. These efforts typically focus on constitutional rights, the duties of citizens in maintaining public order, reporting procedures, and the role of oversight mechanisms. Parallel police reforms, including the expansion of community liaison functions and victim support units, aim to make policing more accessible to women, youth, and residents of informal settlements (Bwalya, 2018; Mwaluyali & Simutanyi, 2017). Empirical

studies suggest that civic literacy enhances cooperation with police, improves evidence reporting, and reduces tolerance for mob justice (Cheelo, 2019). By clarifying procedures and complaint mechanisms, civic education also mitigates misinformation and fear that often discourage victims from reporting.

Lusaka District provides a particularly salient context for examining these dynamics. Rapid urbanisation, dense informal settlements, youth bulges, and socio-economic stressors contribute to high levels of property crime, violence, and gender-based offences. Neighbourhoods such as Matero, Kanyama, and Chawama have become focal points for both crime and community policing initiatives. Here, civic education is delivered via schools, ward development committees, community-based organisations, faith networks, radio programming, and targeted NGO campaigns. Content includes rights during arrest, complaint procedures, community policing structures (e.g., neighbourhood watch and Community Crime Prevention Units), and collective initiatives such as hotspot mapping and youth diversion. Evidence from these communities indicates that where civic education is consistent and context-specific, citizens demonstrate greater knowledge of rights, higher participation in police–community forums, and more willingness to share information (Mulenga, 2020). Yet coverage remains uneven, with language barriers, distrust rooted in prior negative encounters, and socio-economic pressures limiting long-term impact.

Taken together, these dynamics position Lusaka as a relevant case for exploring the role of civic education in strengthening community policing. By tracing its effects on community knowledge, participation, and engagement, this study seeks to understand how civic education contributes to the effectiveness and sustainability of democratic policing in Zambia.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Community policing is central to Zambia’s crime prevention agenda, yet the role of civic education in shaping its success remains insufficiently understood. While policy frameworks highlight citizen sensitisation as vital for building trust and participation, empirical evidence on how civic education enhances awareness of rights, stimulates participation in forums, or sustains engagement in crime prevention in Lusaka District is scarce. Existing research has examined community policing broadly (Bwalya, 2018; Cheelo, 2019) without isolating civic education as a specific determinant of outcomes.

This gap is most evident in heterogeneous neighbourhoods such as Matero, Kanyama, and Chawama, where high-density populations, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and historical mistrust of police complicate community-police relations. Uneven access to information, inconsistent programme coverage, and language barriers may further blunt the effectiveness of civic education. Without clear evidence of impact, the Zambia Police Service and civil society actors lack the basis to design targeted, equitable interventions that strengthen community-police partnerships. This study addresses that gap by examining how civic education influences knowledge, participation, and engagement in crime prevention in Lusaka District.

2.1. General Objective

To examine the impact of civic education on the success of community policing in Lusaka District.

2.2. Specific Objectives

1. To assess the extent to which civic education enhances community awareness of rights and responsibilities in Lusaka District.
2. To evaluate how civic education influences community participation in community policing activities such as forums, patrols, and neighbourhood watch groups.
3. To determine the effect of civic education on community engagement in crime prevention, including reporting mechanisms and information sharing with the police.
4. To identify challenges and limitations that affect the effectiveness of civic education in strengthening community policing in Lusaka District.

2.3. Significance of the Study

This study is significant at multiple levels: theoretical, policy, institutional, and community. At the theoretical level, it contributes to the growing body of literature on community policing by specifically isolating and analysing the role of civic education as a determinant of policing success. Much of the existing research in Zambia and Sub-Saharan Africa has examined community policing broadly (Baker,

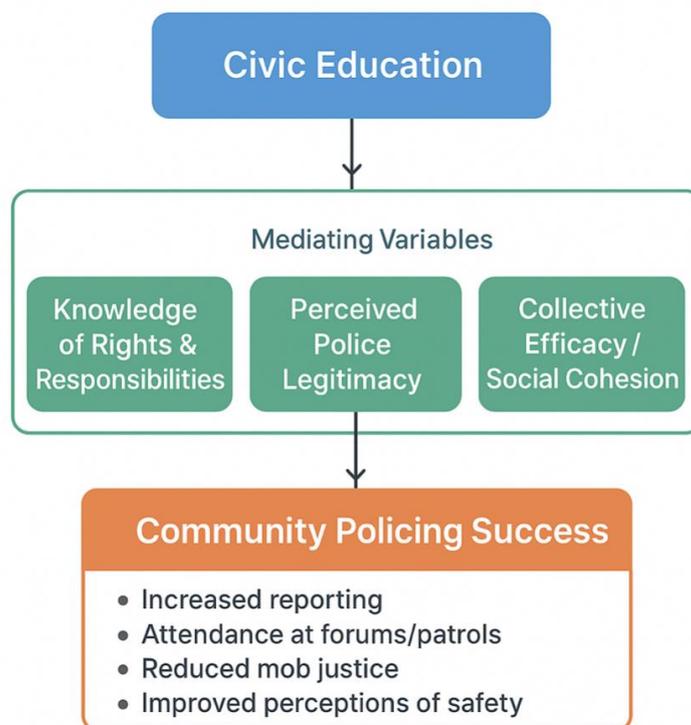
2008; Bwalya, 2018), yet there is a lack of systematic evidence on how civic education translates into tangible outcomes such as increased awareness of rights, participation in forums, and engagement in crime prevention. By addressing this gap, the study advances understanding of the mechanisms through which informed citizenry strengthens democratic policing practices.

At the policy level, the study aligns with Zambia's national security and justice reforms, which emphasise participatory policing, accountability, and crime prevention through community partnerships. Findings from this research will provide evidence-based insights for policymakers, including the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, the Zambia Police Service, and civil society organisations, to design and implement targeted civic education interventions that enhance citizen-police collaboration. This will also complement Zambia's obligations under regional and international frameworks such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (AU, 2007) and Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions (UN, 2015).

At the institutional level, the study will benefit the Zambia Police Service by offering a clearer understanding of how civic education can improve community trust, reduce incidents of mob justice, and increase reporting of crimes. This knowledge can strengthen the operational effectiveness of community policing units such as the Community Crime Prevention Units (CCPUs) and neighbourhood watch groups, particularly in high-crime areas like Matero, Kanyama, and Chawama.

Finally, at the community level, the study empowers citizens by demonstrating how awareness of rights and responsibilities can translate into safer neighbourhoods, enhanced participation in local security structures, and reduced reliance on unlawful forms of justice. Civil society organisations, churches, and community-based groups will equally benefit by gaining insights into how their civic education initiatives can be better aligned with community policing structures for greater impact. Overall, the study is significant because it provides practical, context-specific evidence to inform strategies that foster trust, cooperation, and collective responsibility in crime prevention across Lusaka District.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM



4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DESCRIPTION

4.1. Independent Variable

Civic Education

- Exposure through NGOs, schools, police sensitisation campaigns, radio programmes, and church-based initiatives.

4.2. Mediating Variables

1. *Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities*

- Awareness of due process, legal procedures, arrest rights, reporting channels, and complaint mechanisms.

2. *Perceived Police Legitimacy / Trust*

- Citizens' perceptions of police fairness, responsiveness, and integrity.

3. *Collective Efficacy / Social Cohesion*

- Shared norms, networks, and confidence in community capacity to prevent crime.

4.3. Dependent Variables

Community Policing Success

- Participation: Attendance at CCPUs, neighbourhood forums, volunteer patrols, and watch groups.
- Engagement: Crime reporting, information sharing with police, involvement in dispute resolution.
- Outcomes: Reduced mob justice, improved perceptions of safety, enhanced police-community collaboration.

4.4. Hypothesised Pathways

1. Civic Education → Knowledge of Rights & Responsibilities → Participation in Community Policing → Policing Outcomes
2. Civic Education → Perceived Police Legitimacy → Engagement in Reporting & Information Sharing → Policing Outcomes
3. Civic Education → Collective Efficacy → Participation & Engagement → Policing Outcomes

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of civic education and community policing has received increasing scholarly and policy attention, as both domains focus on strengthening citizen–state relations and promoting collective security. Civic education, understood as programmes that enhance citizens' knowledge of rights, responsibilities, and institutional procedures, is theorised to create the informational, normative, and motivational foundations necessary for collaboration with the police and for sustainable crime prevention. Evidence suggests that civic literacy is associated with increased reporting, participation in forums, and reduced reliance on informal or extrajudicial mechanisms. However, the conversion of awareness into durable engagement remains constrained by institutional responsiveness and local contexts (Putnam, 2000; Bayley, 2006; Skogan, 2006; Baker, 2008). This review discusses theoretical frameworks and empirical findings across themes of civic knowledge, participation, reporting and information-sharing, and implementation challenges, before highlighting the research gap addressed in this study.

Theoretical Frameworks: Civic Education, Social Capital, Procedural Justice and Collective Efficacy

Globally, three frameworks dominate the analysis of civic education and policing. **Social capital theory** posits that trust, civic norms, and networks enable collective action for public goods such as neighbourhood safety (Putnam, 2000). **Procedural justice and legitimacy theory** emphasises that citizens are more likely to cooperate with authorities perceived as fair and accountable (Tyler, 2006). **Collective efficacy theory** links social cohesion and mutual trust to the capacity of communities to regulate behaviour and reduce crime (Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997). Together, these frameworks explain why informed and connected citizens engage constructively with police and sustain participation in local safety initiatives.

Regionally, African scholars have adapted these frameworks to contexts marked by limited state capacity, informality, and contested legitimacy. Civic education is seen as a tool to clarify citizen rights, reduce dependence on vigilante practices, and build civic trust in state policing (Baker, 2008; Hills, 2014). In Zambia, theoretical perspectives emphasise the role of institutional entry points such as Community Crime Prevention Units (CCPUs), NGOs, schools, and churches in translating civic

education into behaviour change, with citizen participation contingent on police responsiveness (Mwaluyali & Simutanyi, 2017; Bwalya, 2018). At the Lusaka level, high-density settlements and histories of police distrust require intensive civic education alongside demonstrable police accountability to generate legitimacy and collective efficacy (Mulenga, 2020).

5.1. Civic Education and Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities

Globally, civic education is strongly associated with increased legal literacy, including awareness of due process, arrest rights, complaint procedures, and victim support mechanisms. This knowledge reduces fear and misinformation that often suppress reporting and engagement (UNODC, 2011; OSCE, 2014). The effectiveness of such programmes is contingent on localisation, repetition, and credible delivery.

In Africa, interventions such as radio campaigns, community workshops, and school curricula have demonstrably improved knowledge, particularly when adapted to vernacular languages and everyday experiences (Baker, 2008; Hills, 2014). In Zambia, studies link civic literacy to awareness of reporting channels and lower tolerance for mob justice, although impacts vary by gender, age, and literacy levels unless pedagogical methods are tailored (Cheelo, 2019; Mwaluyali & Simutanyi, 2017). In Lusaka, NGO workshops, faith-based forums, and radio broadcasts have enhanced citizens' understanding of rights and procedures, though knowledge retention requires ongoing reinforcement (Mulenga, 2020).

5.2. Civic Education, Participation, and Institutional Interfaces

Civic education is hypothesised to reduce informational barriers to participation in community policing whether attending forums, joining neighbourhood watch groups, or volunteering for patrols. Globally, however, participation improves only where institutional structures for engagement are functional and responsive (UNODC, 2011).

In Southern Africa, civic sensitisation paired with accessible complaint mechanisms has increased meeting attendance and consistency of reporting, though participation declines if authorities fail to provide feedback (SADC, 2010; Baker, 2008). In Zambia, civic education has improved turnout and volunteer mobilisation, but long-term engagement depends on whether citizens perceive follow-up from the police (Mwaluyali & Simutanyi, 2017; Bwalya, 2018). In Lusaka, coordinated civic education has enhanced participation in CCPUs and improved the quality of intelligence provided, yet sustaining volunteer motivation remains difficult where institutional responsiveness is weak (Mulenga, 2020).

5.3. Civic Education and Engagement in Reporting and Information-Sharing

Evidence indicates that civic education enhances both the likelihood and quality of crime reporting, especially when citizens understand investigative and evidentiary requirements (Skogan, 2006; UNODC, 2011). Globally, rights-based campaigns have increased reporting of sensitive crimes such as gender-based violence, particularly when stigma reduction and victim support are emphasised.

In Africa, community dialogues and civic radio programming have helped shift norms away from silence and towards lawful reporting (Hills, 2014). In Zambia, civic education has improved urban reporting rates, though citizens are more likely to report property crimes than gender-based violence, reflecting persistent trust deficits in police capacity and impartiality (Cheelo, 2019; Bwalya, 2018). In Lusaka, interventions have temporarily increased tip-offs and formal complaints, but fears of reprisals and doubts about police responsiveness continue to dampen sustained engagement (Mulenga, 2020).

5.4. Contextual and Implementation Challenges

Globally, civic education initiatives face common challenges: limited project cycles, inadequate monitoring of behavioural outcomes, language barriers, and fragmented delivery across multiple actors (OSCE, 2014). In Africa, resource constraints, uneven rural–urban coverage, and weak state–civil society coordination undermine sustainability (Baker, 2008; SADC, 2010).

In Zambia, variability in NGO approaches and persistent distrust of police hinder attribution of behavioural change directly to civic education (Mwaluyali & Simutanyi, 2017). Lusaka's challenges include language mismatches, uneven coverage across wards, and poor feedback loops between police and communities. These gaps reduce the likelihood that enhanced knowledge translates into consistent participation or reliable reporting (Mulenga, 2020).

5.5. Synthesis and Research Gap

The literature supports a causal chain: civic education → increased knowledge and perceived legitimacy → greater participation and reporting → improved policing outcomes. Yet this pathway is shaped by institutional responsiveness, localisation, programme continuity, and neighbourhood heterogeneity. Existing studies in Zambia remain fragmented, often descriptive, and seldom measure mediating constructs such as trust or collective efficacy. Moreover, little comparative analysis exists across Lusaka's diverse wards (e.g., Matero, Kanyama, Chawama), where socio-economic and institutional conditions vary significantly.

This study addresses the gap by empirically testing the pathways linking civic education to knowledge, participation, and engagement in Lusaka District. It combines quantitative measures of awareness, participation, and reporting with qualitative insights into stakeholder practices and perceptions, thereby contributing evidence on how civic education can strengthen community policing in urban African contexts.

6. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a **desk-research design** based on systematic review and thematic synthesis of secondary data. Desk research is an appropriate strategy because it allows for the collation of dispersed empirical and policy evidence on civic education and community policing without the resource and access constraints of large-scale fieldwork (Bowen, 2009; Bryman, 2016). By synthesising existing studies, programme evaluations, policy frameworks, and administrative records, the approach facilitates triangulation of conceptual, programmatic and empirical insights, thereby enhancing the robustness of findings (Gough, Oliver & Thomas, 2017). The design is particularly suited to the Lusaka context, where multiple actors—including the Zambia Police Service (ZPS), civil society organisations, donor agencies, and local communities—have implemented civic education initiatives but where results remain scattered across academic, government and grey-literature sources.

In line with the four specific objectives, the study mapped research questions to different categories of secondary data. For **awareness of rights and responsibilities**, sources include civic education curricula, NGO evaluation reports, and government policy documents that document changes in legal literacy. To examine **community participation in policing activities**, programme reports, Community Crime Prevention Unit (CCPU) attendance records, and case study evidence are reviewed. The question of **engagement in reporting and information-sharing** is addressed through Zambia Police Service statistics, hotline/complaint-centre records, and evaluations of victim-support interventions. Finally, the study identifies **challenges and limitations** from donor reviews, NGO reports, and scholarly policy analyses, with attention to issues such as resource constraints, institutional trust and coordination deficits.

Data were drawn from a wide range of sources to maximise coverage and reduce bias. **Academic databases** such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus and African Journals Online (AJOL) were systematically searched for peer-reviewed studies, while repositories such as PubMed and Web of Science were consulted for social-science perspectives. **Policy and institutional documents** were accessed through the Zambia Police Service, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of Local Government, alongside think-tank publications from organisations such as the Policy Monitoring and Research Centre (PMRC). **Grey literature**, including reports by NGOs (e.g., Caritas Zambia, YWCA, Transparency International Zambia) and international agencies (UNODC, OSCE, SADC), was particularly important, as evaluations of civic education are often unpublished or appear outside conventional academic channels (Adams et al., 2016). Supplementary sources included conference papers, doctoral theses, and local media archives documenting civic education campaigns.

A systematic search strategy was employed using Boolean operators and thematic keywords. Examples of search strings include: "*civic education*" AND "*community policing*" AND *Zambia*; "*civic literacy*" AND "*crime reporting*" AND *Lusaka*; and "*Community Crime Prevention Units*" AND *evaluation* AND *Zambia*. Searches were conducted across titles, abstracts and full texts, with backward and forward citation tracking to identify additional studies (Xiao & Watson, 2019). To ensure reproducibility, search dates, databases and exact terms were recorded, and a PRISMA flow diagram will be included in the appendix.

Clear **inclusion and exclusion criteria** were applied. Eligible documents were published between 2010 and 2025, written in English, and directly addressed civic education, community policing, or reporting behaviour in Zambia, Southern Africa or comparable contexts. Studies without substantive empirical or programmatic content, duplicates, or inaccessible reports were excluded. Data were extracted using a structured template capturing key attributes such as author, year, intervention description, outcomes measured, and reported findings. Separate logs were maintained for administrative statistics to enable simple trend analyses. Reference management software (Zotero) supported citation management, while a coding framework based on the study's conceptual model guided thematic extraction.

To ensure quality and trustworthiness, all sources were critically appraised according to their type. Peer-reviewed studies were assessed on methodological rigour, while programme evaluations were judged on clarity of indicators and presence of baseline/comparison data (Gough et al., 2017). Administrative statistics were evaluated for completeness and disaggregation. Each source was assigned a credibility rating (high, medium, low) to inform synthesis. Reliability was strengthened through source triangulation, maintenance of an audit trail, and inter-coder checks in qualitative coding (Bowen, 2009).

Data analysis combined **quantitative descriptive synthesis** and **qualitative thematic analysis**. Quantitative data, such as crime reporting trends or programme participation figures, were standardised where possible (e.g., reports per 1,000 residents) and tabulated across neighbourhoods. Where heterogeneity limited statistical comparability, narrative synthesis was used to summarise effect directions. Qualitative evidence was thematically analysed around the mediating pathways identified in the conceptual framework: knowledge, trust, collective efficacy, participation, and engagement. Matrix synthesis was applied to align sources against objectives, and short case summaries were developed for Matero, Kanyama and Chawama to illustrate local dynamics.

Despite these measures, desk research carries inherent **limitations**. Attribution challenges persist, as causality between civic education and outcomes cannot be fully established without primary data (Bryman, 2016). Data heterogeneity, publication bias, and limited ward-level disaggregation may restrict comparability across neighbourhoods. These constraints are acknowledged and used to recommend targeted primary data collection in future research. Nevertheless, by collating fragmented evidence into a coherent synthesis, this methodology provides an empirically grounded basis for evaluating the role of civic education in strengthening community policing in Lusaka.

7. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study examines the influence of civic education on community policing effectiveness in Lusaka District, Zambia, with a focus on Matero, Kanyama, and Chawama townships. It explores how civic education shapes citizens' knowledge of rights and responsibilities, participation in crime prevention, and engagement with policing initiatives. Institutionally, the analysis is limited to the Zambia Police Service particularly Community Crime Prevention Units, neighbourhood watch groups, and police–community liaison offices and non-state actors involved in civic education delivery, including NGOs, churches, and community-based organisations. Temporally, the study covers initiatives and practices implemented between 2015 and 2024.

Conducted as desk research, the study relies on existing literature, policy documents, official statistics, and published reports. This approach allows for broad coverage of civic education and community policing activities while avoiding the logistical constraints of primary fieldwork.

However, several limitations are inherent. Dependence on secondary sources introduces potential reporting bias and data gaps, while cross-sectional and descriptive evidence limits causal inference. Geographic focus on Lusaka restricts generalisability to rural or less urbanised areas. Differences in programme documentation across stakeholders pose challenges for standardisation and comparison. Finally, the absence of primary interviews constrains nuanced understanding of citizen perceptions. Despite these limitations, triangulation of diverse sources enhances the credibility, reliability, and contextual validity of the findings.

8. DISCUSSION

The findings of this desk-based study confirm the central proposition of the conceptual framework: civic education functions as a catalyst for community policing outcomes through the sequential pathways of knowledge acquisition, enhanced participation, and increased engagement in reporting.

However, the evidence also highlights that these pathways are not automatic; they are mediated by contextual, institutional and programmatic factors that determine whether civic education translates into sustained improvements in policing outcomes.

8.1. Civic Education and Knowledge of Rights

Consistent with global evaluations, the review shows that civic education interventions substantially improve legal literacy, particularly citizens' understanding of rights during arrest, reporting mechanisms, and complaint channels (UNODC, 2011; OSCE, 2014). In Zambia, this knowledge has been associated with reduced tolerance for mob justice and greater willingness to consider lawful channels (Cheelo, 2019). This aligns with the conceptual framework's first link civic education to knowledge suggesting that even in low-resource settings, informational interventions can shift cognitive baselines. Yet, the persistence of knowledge gains is uneven across demographic groups, echoing findings from comparative studies in Africa that emphasise the importance of localisation and repeated reinforcement (Baker, 2008; Hills, 2014).

8.2. Knowledge to Participation

The second pathway knowledge to participation is partially supported. Civic education clearly reduces informational barriers to community involvement in forums, patrols and watch groups. For example, reports from Lusaka indicate that coordinated NGO–police civic education campaigns have increased attendance at CCPUs and generated volunteer activity (Mulenga, 2020). This reflects findings in other African settings, where sensitisation combined with functional liaison structures drives participation (SADC, 2010). However, the sustainability of such participation is fragile: volunteer fatigue and weak institutional responsiveness reduce long-term retention (Mwaluyali & Simutanyi, 2017). This confirms the theoretical insight of procedural justice theory (Tyler, 2006): knowledge must be coupled with perceptions of fairness and responsiveness to maintain active participation.

8.3. Participation to Engagement in Reporting

The third pathway participation to engagement in reporting and information-sharing shows mixed outcomes. Civic education increases willingness to report crimes, particularly property-related offences, and enhances the specificity of intelligence provided to police (Skogan, 2006; Cheelo, 2019). However, gaps remain in the reporting of gender-based violence and other sensitive crimes, where stigma and lack of trust in police confidentiality persist (Hills, 2014; Bwalya, 2018). In Lusaka, short-term spikes in reporting after civic education campaigns tend to decline unless accompanied by visible police action (Mulenga, 2020). This suggests that engagement outcomes are mediated not only by civic knowledge and participation but also by collective efficacy (Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997), which requires reciprocal trust between citizens and police.

8.4. Outcomes and Constraints

The final link engagement to improved policing outcomes is evident but conditional. While civic education has reduced reliance on mob justice and increased citizen contributions to policing in some Lusaka neighbourhoods, the overall effectiveness remains constrained by programmatic challenges: fragmented delivery, uneven geographic coverage, language mismatches, and weak coordination among state and non-state actors (Mwaluyali & Simutanyi, 2017; OSCE, 2014). These constraints reflect broader regional patterns in Africa, where structural deficits in institutional capacity limit the scalability and sustainability of civic education (Baker, 2008; SADC, 2010).

8.5. Policy and Theoretical Implications

From a policy perspective, the findings highlight the need to embed civic education within a broader ecosystem of police reform and community engagement. Civic education alone can initiate awareness and short-term behavioural change, but without institutional responsiveness-timely follow-up, feedback mechanisms, and visible enforcement-gains dissipate. Strengthening CCPUs, expanding multi-language civic education campaigns, and ensuring consistent coordination between NGOs, churches, and police structures are critical for sustaining outcomes in Lusaka.

Theoretically, the study underscores the value of combining social capital theory (Putnam, 2000), procedural justice (Tyler, 2006) and collective efficacy (Sampson et al., 1997) to explain the mechanisms linking civic education to community policing outcomes. The evidence suggests that civic

education primarily strengthens cognitive and normative resources (knowledge, trust, efficacy), but these must be converted into behavioural outputs through legitimate and responsive institutions. This resonates with broader debates on democratic policing, which emphasise co-production of security as contingent upon both informed citizenry and institutional legitimacy (Bayley, 2006; Skogan, 2006).

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings confirm that civic education plays a vital enabling role in strengthening community policing by enhancing legal awareness, stimulating participation in safety initiatives, and encouraging crime reporting. However, the analysis also demonstrates that its long-term effectiveness is constrained by institutional weaknesses, programme discontinuities, and contextual barriers such as low literacy and distrust of police. Thus, civic education is best understood as a catalyst that must be embedded within broader reforms to ensure sustainability.

Policy recommendations include:

1. **Institutionalisation of civic education** within Zambia Police Service structures, integrating it into routine training for Community Crime Prevention Units (CCPUs) and neighbourhood watch groups.
2. **Targeted outreach** in underserved urban wards such as Matero and Kanyama, with materials tailored to local languages and literacy levels.
3. **Multi-stakeholder coordination** among police, NGOs, churches, and community leaders to reduce programme duplication and enhance coverage.
4. **Strengthening police responsiveness and feedback mechanisms**, ensuring that increased reporting translates into visible action and improved trust.
5. **Monitoring and evaluation frameworks** to measure the long-term impact of civic education on crime prevention outcomes, citizen trust, and procedural fairness.

Theoretical implications suggest that civic education reinforces community policing most effectively when aligned with procedural justice principles and social capital theories, which emphasise legitimacy, reciprocity, and collective efficacy. Future research should triangulate desk findings with primary data from community members and police officers to capture lived experiences and measure behavioural impacts more robustly.

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