



Implementing Community Policing in the Belgian Federal Police and in the South African Police Service

By Jacques Philippaerts & Julius Phahlane

Last year, the Belgian Federal Police, called the "Rijkswacht" (in Dutch) or the "Gendarmerie" (in French), celebrated their 200th anniversary. Nevertheless, the Belgian Government intends to amalgamate the Rijkswacht in the future with the Municipal Police and the Judicial Police, the two other existing police services. In the Rijkswacht alone there are about 17,700 members.

In South Africa, an amalgamation process started immediately after the elections. Eleven police forces were integrated into the South African Police Service (SAPS). This organization consists of about 144,000 members in a country 39 times larger than Belgium, with a much higher crime rate and 11 national languages, where Belgium has only three. What a challenge to implement a change strategy.

The change process

At the end of 1992 the Rijkswacht began an overall change process to implement their new mission statement, which was based on the principles of Community Policing. This was necessary because, in the past, policing was very traditional, reactive, mostly repressive and focused mainly on their own priorities and the priorities of the federal police authorities. As an organization, the Rijkswacht was very centralized, bureaucratic, closed and internally oriented.

A first step was the demilitarization which took place on 1 January 1992. As a vehicle for the overall change process, a project called "Basic Policing Care with Quality" was launched at the beginning of 1993. The two project leaders, one for the Dutch and one for the French speaking parts of Belgium, together with four facilitators kicked off at 14 pilot stations. The objective was to improve the quality of service delivery towards the community at the local level. An external consultant trained the first four facilitators in the method based on problem solving, project management and tools and techniques used in Total Quality Management (TQM).

This vehicle was used not only for the implementation of the mission statement but also to obtain the cultural change to the extent that all members should become "problem solvers" using their creativity to improve and renew their service delivery and to find new answers for existing police problems.

During the pilot project team meetings, the station commissioner started working closely with the grass-roots level police members, thus initiating a more participatory management style. Through the "oil stain" other members got involved within the pilot stations, and even more important was the external "oil stain" which means that good ideas and results from the pilot stations were implemented at other stations. They were also, very often, implemented by means of project teams. A second (1994) and third (1995) round of projects kicked off resulting in all stations running their own projects by the beginning of 1996. Meanwhile, the facilitators network grew with new facilitators coming on board. Due to crime related problems, new tools also had to be integrated into the method.

In 1994, the Government of South Africa choose the Belgian Rijkswacht as a partner to assist them with their change process. This was due to several similarities such as military background, multiple languages and lack of trust from the community. After thorough preparation in 1995, the Community Policing Pilot Project was launched in 1996 with the objective to improve the quality of service delivery within the SAPS. For the purpose of agreement between Belgium and South Africa, this process was called the Community Policing Pilot Project. This is known, however, as the Community Policing Problem Solving Process at the grass-roots level. A total of 40 pilot stations were chosen where this project would commence.

At the beginning of 1996, a Belgian facilitator team trained the first 11 South African facilitators, two from the national level and nine from the provincial level. Most of these facilitators immediately kicked off at pilot stations. A second round of training took place in July and August of 1996. The SAPS head facilitator had constant back up from Belgian facilitators during this time. From January to March 1997, a third round of training took place at decentralized venues throughout South Africa. Currently the National Facilitators Network consists of three national facilitators with the provinces each having a Provincial Facilitator who in turn has a network of facilitators with him/her in the province. Each province also has a Provincial Project Leader who has the responsibility of coordinating the projects in the province. Overall, the projects are coordinated from the National office by the National Project Leader.

Methodology

During the first round of projects in the Rijkswacht a linear problem solving model, consisting of seven steps, was used with more than 20 possible activities within these steps. Due to our "learning by doing" approach and the fact that project teams met only once a week, some of the projects took more than 12 months before being finalized, after which a script was written about lessons

learned during the process. For smaller problems in quality circles, the CRIME method was introduced. This seemed to be easier to understand and more adaptable to our needs and expectations.

First improvement of the method

In September 1995, one of the two Belgian head facilitators attended the first CPS-B (Creative Problem Solving Group - Buffalo)/CIC (Creativity and Innovation Center-Europe) European Facilitating Creative Problem Solving (CPS) program. The experience helped the Belgian trainers to prepare the training material and the training course for the South African facilitators. First, the linear seven-step model initially used by the Belgian facilitators and the CRIME method were integrated and thereafter simplified. Secondly, the CPS model and tools (e.g. the Task Appraisal model, the Advantages, Limitations, Unique Qualities and Overcome Limitations (ALUo) tool, the Brainstorming with Post-Its™ tool, the Guidelines for Generating Options and the Guidelines for Focusing Options) had been used during the training in South Africa, together with the CRIME model. The South African police members liked the buzzword "CRIME" for the problem solving process indicating that not only the real crime related problems must be dealt with, but also problems of quality of service delivery and problems of the relationship between police and communities.

The CRIME model

In the CRIME model, the "C" stands for "characterize the situation." This step consists of the identification and selection of the project theme and the delineation thereof. The "R" stands for "repair immediately" or to stop the bleeding, after which the "I" comes and represents "identify the root causes." We not only try to identify the underlying problems but also to obtain a zero base measurement and include this in the SO SMART objectives (Strategically OK, Specific, Measurable, Attractive or achievable, Realistic and Time bound). After these steps, the problem is clearly defined and it will be possible to find the best solutions. In the "M," which is "make up a solution package," we commence with generating ideas, bringing them together in alternative hypotheses and testing them to find the solution that is the most appropriate to solve the problem. Before the test, there must be an approval from a higher level of authority, in some cases, the project leader. Afterwards, definite implementation is only possible after positive test results. For this reason, a presentation for the higher levels of authority is built into the steps. During the "E" phase which is "monitor and evaluate the implementation of the solution package," there is a follow-up of the implementation of the measures, an evaluation to see if the solution is effective and a process evaluation (lessons learned). In the final script, the project results are written down, together with the "lessons learned". Finally, the

measures to prevent regression of the performance and the integration into the line function will be part of this script.

Second improvement of the method

After the training in South Africa, the CRIME-model, the Task Appraisal model and some other new tools were introduced into the Belgian facilitators network. Indeed, in the mean time, the approach had to be extended to solve crime-related problems to be more effective in policing. Two facilitators attended training in Canada and returned with the Scan, Analyze, Respond and Assess (SARA) approach (H. Goldstein, J. Eck, W. Spelman and others). This model is more or less the same as the CRIME model. All this resulted in a lot of improvements to our method. These were integrated into the new facilitators manual where the CRIME model is used as a foundation. This method contains a matrix which assists in deciding which tool to use during which step. The Task Appraisal model is not only being used as an instrument for preparation, but also as a method of communicating feedback, together with the ALUo, between the facilitators and the head facilitator on the process. The ALUo is also being used to give feedback during meetings, training sessions, etc.

Third improvement of the method

At the moment, there is a definite need for a more flexible approach to problem solving due to the complexity of the problems being encountered. In May 1997, three Belgian and five South African facilitators attended a second Facilitating CPS program sponsored by CPS-B and CIC. The challenge now facing us is the integration of the CRIME model and the CPS model as described by CPS-B. This is a challenge in that the CRIME framework is not only highly accepted but also prescribed as a certain standard for problem solving in both organizations (Belgian Federal and South African Police Service). A first attempt has already been made. The problem identification and selection in the "C" phase (characterize the situation) is closely associated with the Mess-finding stage. While doing the delineation of the project theme, you are busy with the Data-finding stage. The "R" phase (repair immediately) will remain as is. The "I" phase (identification of the root causes) is more or less the same as the Problem-finding stage within the Understanding the Problem Component. The Idea-finding stage is the first part of the "M" phase (make up a solution package), after which comes the Solution-finding stage (with alternative hypotheses and testing phase). The Acceptance-finding stage is even larger than our current "presentation and report" within the "M". This means that the Planning for Action Component is also present in the "M" phase. There are two major differences. First of all: "Generating Ideas" in the CRIME model is not a separate component, rather, it is the first stage within the "M" (make up a solution package). Second:

The "E" (monitor and evaluate the implementation of the solution package) must be included into the CRIME framework as a component on its own.

Another challenge facing us is the inclusion of the tools used during the CPS training into our current tool box. In addition, training the facilitators in the Belgian and in the South African network to enable them to use the improved framework and tool box is a concern for the future. The first contacts with CIC Europe were laid to organize in-company training in the creativity tools for all Belgian facilitators.

Conclusion

Within the Belgian Rijkswacht, a network of about 25 trained facilitators has been established within three years. Some of these facilitators are already back at their stations and receive help from assistant facilitators. Within the South African Police Service there is a network of about 50 trained facilitators after a period of one year.

The CRIME method is accepted and is continually being improved and adapted to changing needs. This method is working in Europe and Africa. A first milestone in the change process "from force to service" has been reached. A lot of creativity will be needed to reach the international vision of the creation of a safe and secure environment for all communities.

Editor's Notes:

Julius joined the South African Police Force after public school. He holds a diploma in Police Administration and a BA in Police Science. He has held the positions of Warrant Officer, Community Policing Official and Deputy Head at the District Level of the Division Community Relations. Afterwards he became a lecturer in police science at the Police College and was promoted to Captain at that time. Since March 1996, he has been appointed as the National Facilitator for CPPP (Community Policing Pilot Project). Julius, together with four other South African Police Facilitators, has attended the Facilitating Creative Problem Solving program which took place in Belgium in May, 1997.

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