Review of the Edmonton Police Service's Strategy for Engaging Emerging Communities

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Speakers

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Background: Emerging Communities Framework

To create working strategies and actions that will guide the Edmonton Police Service to establish *legitimacy, trust* and *relationships* with Edmonton's *emerging communities*

Background: Definition of Emerging Communities

The framework defined **emerging communities** as: newcomer communities to Edmonton that are newly arrived, small in number and have all or a combination of the following characteristics:

- have had a significant increase in numbers over the last 5 years;
- lack established family networks, support systems, community structures and resources (relative to more established communities);
- be more vulnerable than established communities as they are often from a refugee; background and have experienced displacement due to civil unrest;
- have individual members with low levels of education and skill due to displacement;
- have individual members who do not have English language skills;
- have individual members who are unfamiliar with mainstream government services and less likely to be able to locate services that can help them meet their basic needs;
- tend to not have a community infrastructure and organizations that can attract funding.

Background: Definition of Legitimacy

"Police require voluntary cooperation from the general public to be effective in controlling crime and maintaining order. **Research shows that citizens are more likely to respect and cooperate with police and obey the law when they view the police as legitimate.**

There are different ways to increase police legitimacy. [The most relevant for this framework] include: a) how police establish relationships with community stakeholders (i.e. businesses, schools etc.) b) how police use procedural justice when interacting with citizens (treating citizens with dignity and respect, conveying trustworthy motives, and allowing citizens to speak up and express views during encounters), and c) how police seek to improve their performance and communicate their efforts.

Research has shown that establishing legitimacy is relational and dialogic (that is, there needs to be ongoing responses to citizens)."

Mazerolle, L., Bennett, S. Davis, J., Sargeant, E., & Manning, M. (2012). Legitimacy in Policing: A Systemic Review. Campbell Systematic Reviews: 2013 (1).

Activities Implemented
Emerging Communities Framework (2016-2018)

Internal EPS Activities		Community EPS Activities	
Leadership Support & Messaging	i.e. EPS Net articles on current communities, events, opportunities to connect and EPS initiatives	**Ongoing Partnerships**	i.e. agencies, Reception House, LINC presentations, REACH Youth Engagement, Safety Summit, EPS cadets
Training	i.e. PTSD in Refugee communities, Bias Awareness, American Sign Language	**One-Time Presentations**	i.e. schools, agencies
Police Operations Support	i.e. settlement maps, cultural training, operational file support, Community Liaison Committee, Hate Crimes Detail, COSU	**Consultation to Community Leaders/Rep-resentatives**	i.e. meetings with different ethno-immigrant cultural groups
Complementary initiatives	i.e. PACE, Safe in Six, ReStore (restorative justice)	**Capacity Building of Community Agencies**	i.e. serving as a resource to agencies
		Participation in Broader Community Events	i.e. Winter Wonderland, Proclamations, Basketball Tournaments, Cultural Galas, Pride Parade etc.

Review Objectives

- To identify to what extent the EPS Emerging Communities Framework has been implemented, both internally within EPS and externally, with community partners? And what are the factors that have supported or served as a barrier to implementation?

- To what extent has implementation of the EPS Emerging Communities Framework contributed towards the Framework's Objective: the establishment of legitimacy, trust and relationships with Edmonton's emerging communities?

- To define what outcomes (what changes we see) in the short and medium term as a result of implementing the EPS Emerging Communities Framework

Review Methods

- Document Review

- Grey and Academic Literature Review

- Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Interviews
    - 4 focus groups with community members and community agencies
    - 3 focus groups with EPS members
    - 2 phone interviews with individual community members or representatives of community agencies
    - 5 interviews with EPS members and/or EPS employees
- Presentation of Draft Results - Co-generation of Recommendations

Thematic Findings

Understanding Perceptions

- Legitimacy
- The Need for EPS Framework for Emerging Communities
- Awareness of EPS Framework for Emerging Communities

What Have We Learned

- What Worked Well
- What Limited Effectiveness

How effective has EPS been in Building Legitimacy with Emerging Communities?

Moving Forward: What Needs to Happen?

- Overall EPS Framework
- Internal to EPS
- External with Community Partners

Other

- Partners to consider
- Barriers
- Indicators

Lessons Learned: What Worked Well

- Direct community engagement – places of safe engagement, two-way, and not necessarily structured (i.e. PACE)

- Individual Interactions: being adaptable, approachable, respectful, following up, showing "humanity" and less authoritarian

- Working with youth (Police and Youth Engagement Program and SROs)

- Senior Member Champions

- Training – PTSD, Bias Awareness, ASL, Community Context, Recruit Intercultural Communication

Lessons Learned: What Worked Well

- Partners and Community Agencies : 1) Those that serve community members 2) Those that also seek to make services accessible as well, like health and children's services and 3) Those who partner in provision of service

- Engagement that shares EPS purpose and services with emerging community members

- Attention to messaging (work context)

- Other: diverse police force, individuals are committed, **interpretation services use,** interactions outside of police station, support of police operations, resiliency project

"*I think [what worked was] just talking to [communities] and engaging with them. I don't think there is a classroom program that can make an impact like hearing a deep story from a community member. Learning about what it was like where they came from. This is the most changing thing for me ... Because beat officers were forced to do that as part of their job, they were forced to know more about these communities. The members who were part of this, they moved and you could see the shift. Immersing yourself in these populations allows you to understand.*"

Lessons Learned: What Limited Effectiveness

- Limited leadership and systemic support for community engagement
  - Translates to lack of consistent commitment – trust with community gets broken
  - Translates to lack of time

  Implications because legitimacy is relational.

- Although there are benefits, difficult to measure impact of community engagement in organizational context where measurement is important

- Engagement is perceived as not being distributed throughout EPS membership or being intentional

- Interpretive services are important for trust – currently rely on community members, community agencies or informal EPS approaches which compromise confidentiality, reliability and timeliness

Lessons Learned: What Limited Effectiveness

- Training is limited – foundational information is missing, doesn't extend to all EPS members and not sure how used in practice

- Uniform creates barriers

- Community Engagement Role
  - Fundamental police function?
  - Obligations of EPS members for enforcement when in community engagement
  Can create unintended impacts despite positive intent

- Other: accessing community capital, absence of values that align with community engagement

"It's frustrating for our partnerships. [They think] 'you'll be gone and we'll have to teach another person' ... [EPS] is hot out of the gate with no endurance and consistency."

"Patrol are on for 3-5 years and there is no way to engage. And there you are dealing with the worst of the worst and only seeing quick, negative snippets ... Will that strengthen your bias or will that allow you an opportunity to learn? Community engagement side – there is no time for it. You can't just have a coffee with a community member – you are too busy being reactive."

"There are better ways of engaging communities ... I look [at the handout of activities] and it seems like there is so much done – it looks shiny but we feel like the relationship hasn't really changed. The [EPS] mean well but they don't know how... They really need to understand what partnership is. The pillar of reconciliation is to listen, respect and to learn."

Generated Implications

How effective has EPS been in Building Legitimacy with Emerging Communities?

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Moving Forward: What Needs to Happen?

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Implications: Overall Framework

- **Framework needs to be grounded in values and purpose of EPS, accessible (to be referenced) and connected to activities, explicit in purpose with clear definitions and communicated externally and internally**

- Framework should connect to other relevant strategies to collate learning

- **Next phase of Framework implementation should strive to be relational and transformational – not transactional**

- Recognizing Treaty 6 as foundation of reconciliation and respect, EPS should consider **embedding the next phase of this Framework within a perspective that furthers reconciliation** with Indigenous communities

Implications – Short Term Systemic Support

- Framework needs strategies to **explicitly demonstrate leadership support**
- Specific engagement efforts needed for middle managers if it seeks to impact frontline practice
- Framework needs to consider the organizational aspects (i.e. what unit and leadership) to sustain this Framework
- Most respondents want to sustain efforts of the Framework – **simple accountability measures** should be explored (i.e. reporting to external body or public) to sustain organizational support
- Examine and review related competencies to support community engagement practices, and tie them **into performance reviews and promotion criteria**
- Capture the impact of this support

Implications – Long Term Systemic Support

- Limited time for activities that contribute to establishing legitimacy with emerging communities is one of the significant challenges. The Framework could prioritize identifying longer-term solutions, and identifying the pros and cons of **decentralizing responsibility** for these issues

- Diversifying the EPS workforce

Implications – Activities to Consider

- **Integrate deliberate direct engagement approaches** (i.e. focusing on deep relationships with selected communities for a specific block of time; identifying criteria for direct community engagement opportunities and only engaging in those)

- Comprehensive training program, taking into account differing needs of EPS members and different modalities
- **Youth focused activities**
- **Interpretation resources and its accessibility to operations**
- **Engaging community agencies as partners**
- External funding opportunities

Implications: Measuring Impact and Reinforcing Learning

- Validate logic model produced in this report and produce an evaluation and dissemination plan

- Build informal evaluation mechanisms

- Consistent with reconciliatory and transformational approach, **facilitate lessons learned in trusted spaces, that promote reflection and learning for all parties involved, integrating them with other parallel initiatives** (i.e. Indigenous engagement)

- Align the Emerging Communities Framework evaluative activities with EPS as a whole

Speakers

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