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REFORM FEATURES IN THE POLICE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Of law enforcement is undergoing a period of critical reevaluation. Public trust in police institutions has been shaken by high-profile incidents involving excessive force and racial bias. In response, a growing movement advocates for reforming the educational system that shapes police officers. This call for change seeks to address systemic issues and equip officers with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively serve and protect their communities.

This abstracts will delve into the key features of these proposed reforms, exploring how they aim to cultivate a more community-oriented approach, enhance de-escalation tactics, and prioritize officer well-being. We will then analyze the potential outcomes of such reforms, examining their impact on crime rates, public trust, and officer effectiveness.

By delving into these aspects, we can gain a deeper understanding of how police education reforms can foster a safer and more just future for all.

Police reform aims to transform the values, culture, policies and practices of police organizations so that police can perform their duties with respect for democratic values, human rights and the rule of law. Such reform aims to achieve a professional style of democratic policing that:

- takes a people-centred approach to security;
- protects human rights in accordance with national and international law;
- is responsive to the different security needs of all people regardless of gender, age, class, ethnicity or other characteristic or association;
- assists all people, in particular those members of the community in need of immediate help;
- upholds high levels of accountability in its conduct;
- establishes an effective system of democratic control and oversight over the police;

- builds a public service that is efficient and effective.

Police reform also aims to improve how the police interact with other parts of the security sector, such as the courts and departments of corrections, or executive, parliamentary or independent authorities with management or oversight responsibilities [1].

A police reform process requires coordination among multiple stakeholders. National government, together with relevant local governments, should initiate and actively support the reform effort and convince other stakeholders also to support the reform: oversight institutions, management authorities, civil society organizations and the public may all be consulted or involved directly. In peacebuilding or transition contexts, international actors can support national efforts at police reform but national institutions must always lead these reforms. Police reform typically involves a period of strategic assessment (or pre-analysis), design and strategic planning, implementation and evaluation. Strategic assessment: Assessing the need for and priorities of reform requires a thorough analysis of the police organization, its personnel and relationships with other institutions, civil society and the general public. Consultations with various stakeholders from all groups in society and across all ranks within the police will help to:

- identify underlying problems within the police;
- conduct a gender equality audit;
- determine how different actors perceive existing problems;
- establish need for reform;
- test the willingness to reform;
- rally support and resources. This information serves as a baseline crucial for evaluating reform progress later on [2].

Key features of the reform in the police education system and their results:

1. Shifting the focus to community policing and cultural competence:
 - training police officers to build relationships with the communities they serve and to understand and respect different cultures;
 - contributes to a reduction in crime and increased public trust in the police.
2. More rigorous training in de-escalation and use of force:

- teaching police officers how to de-escalate tense situations and use force only when absolutely necessary;
 - helps reduce the number of police shootings and other use of force incidents.
3. Increased use of technology and data-driven policing:
 - police departments use technology to collect and analyse data on crime trends and identify potential suspects;
 - contributes to more efficient and effective policing.
 4. Emphasis on the well-being and mental health of officers:
 - police officers face increasing stress and mental health issues;
 - police departments are providing more support to officers to help them cope with these challenges.
 5. Increased accountability and transparency:
 - police departments implement new policies and procedures to increase accountability and transparency;
 - this includes things like body cameras and community review boards.

References:

1. What is police reform. URL: https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_16_PoliceReform_EN_Ju12022.pdf.
2. How are police reforms carried out. URL: https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_16_PoliceReform_EN_Jul2022.pdf.