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**Public Safety Consultation Project:  
Community Perspectives on Policing  
and Crime within the Mohawk  
Territory of Kahnawake**

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7/30/2015

Kahnawake Peacekeepers Service Board

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# Public Safety Consultation Project: Community Perspectives on Policing and Crime within the Mohawk Territory of Kahnawake

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## **Public Safety Research Project**

### **Introduction**

The Peacekeepers Service Board, an empowered governing board established through the Kahnawake Peacekeeper's Law (MCR) is mandated to determine objectives and priorities with respect to police services in the community. In addition, the board is tasked with establishing policies for the effective management of the Peacekeeper Department, including procedures for Peacekeeper training, the recruitment and appointment of the Chief Peacekeeper, the general monitoring of his or her performance, the guidelines for secondary or off-duty activities of Peacekeepers Officers, including the overseeing of the administration of the complaints process established to review complaints made against Peacekeepers.

The Peacekeepers Services Board identified a need to determine community perception on crime and peacekeeping efforts in order to assist with the development of strategic plans on community policing initiatives. As a result, a brief consultation project was launched in July 2015 in order to gather community feedback through a strategically designed questionnaire. The survey was designed to gauge public opinion on three areas concerning crime and Policing to include; perceptions on crime rates and crime, Peacekeeper performance and community based strategies over policing and crime prevention.

### **Research Objectives:**

The research project was aimed to investigate community perception on crime and Peacekeeping/policing efforts in order to assess if there is a need to introduce various measures to better align services with community need. The underlying assessment is driven to strengthen the relationship between the community and the Peacekeepers by determining what the community concerns were and what type of measures could be introduced or improved on in order to create a healthier relationship with local law enforcement. First Nations community based policing models are built on the foundation of trust, transparency and relationship building between the community and the agency. This research project was intended to examine all issues, showcase positive exercises of law enforcement and enhance others that may be in need of attention. It's main objective is to solidify the relationship between the community and the Peacekeepers, promote trust and ultimately work toward reducing crime by promoting social organization through policing efforts. First Nations communities may not have a high number of serious crime, however, higher incidents of social

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disorganization exists, including a greater instance of social problems. As a result, First Nations policing agencies must respond more proactively with the community in which they police in order to produce a more socially cohesive community.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The consultation approach was separated into two main areas; a) *Determining current community perception on crime* (frequency, location, causation and type of crimes) and b) *Determining current community perception on peacekeeping efforts with respect to crime prevention and community engagement*.

Written comments from each survey were collected into one main list and divided into themes to provide additional indication of community need and perception over crime and Policing within the community. Surveyors included a total of (5) additional “areas” where they felt crime was occurring outside of the area options listed in question 5 “*Where do you think crime is most occurring*”, as a result that data was included in the summary of question (5). In addition, comments for each area, outside the scope of the proposed question, were summarized to provide additional community feedback in that given area.

## **COMMUNICATION PLAN**

Information was collected via a 10 question survey both online and in person. The on line survey was administered at [Kahnawake.com/pksurvey](http://Kahnawake.com/pksurvey) through an independent survey website in which a total of 60 responses were collected online. Advertising for the on-line survey took place on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 on the local radio through hourly news reports.

An article with the goals of the project and web address for the survey was published in the Eastern Door (July 10, 2015). In addition, the researchers provided a live community interview on K103 Thursday, July 16, 2015 explaining the project and providing the survey web address. A copy of the web addresses were also given out at the kiosk for community members to fill out (should they not have enough time at the kiosk).

Finally, an advert was provided for MCK staff (250 employees) on the on line “Bulletin Board” with a link to the survey with a \$75.00 Shop Kahnawake gift certificate provided as an incentive to MCK employees, chosen at random.

In person kiosks were also conducted at the Kahnawake Service Complex from July 15th-16, 2015 involving; Peacekeepers, Peacekeeper Service Board (PSB) members and Peacekeeper Ethics Committee (PEC) members. Kiosk respondents were also given the chance to win a 75\$ shop Kahnawake gift certificate in exchange for completion of the survey as well as free

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Peacekeeper key chains, pens, pencils, magnets and temporary tattoos. The kiosks produced a total of 122 respondents for the in person surveys.

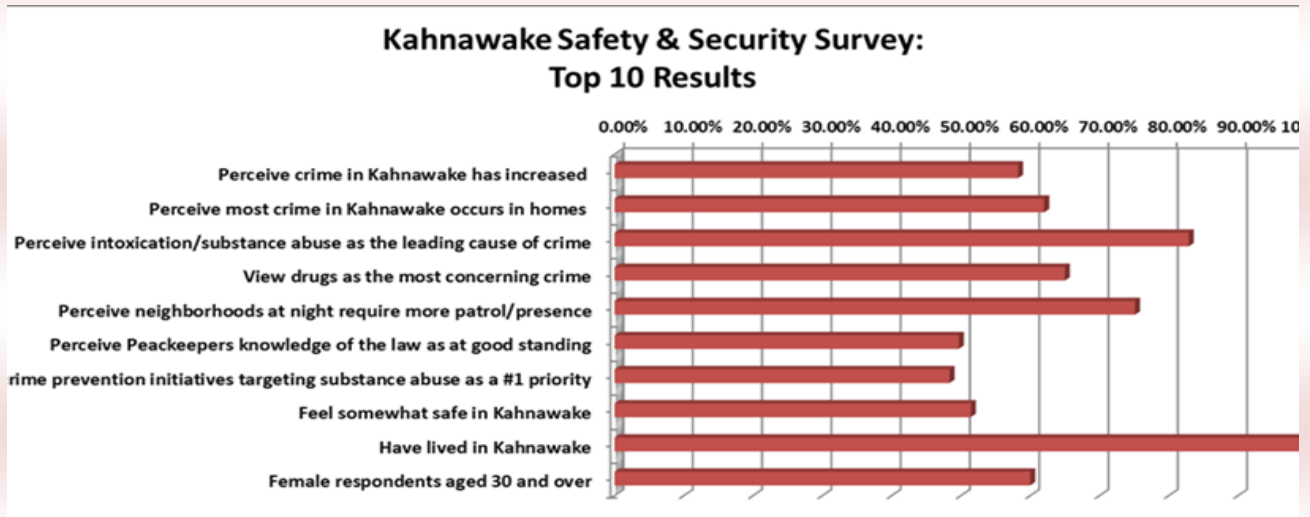
A survey respondent was chosen at random from names placed in a box on July 16, 2015 and awarded a Shop Kahnawake gift certificate.

A final total of 182 surveys were collected from both on line and in person from July 15, 2015 to August 30, 2015.

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## Data Breakdown

### OVERALL TOP 10 RESULTS BREAKDOWN



-Typical responded was from Kahnawake who perceives crime is increasing and result of intoxicants

Overall, the community consultation project yielded key results that will provide effective recommendations to the peacekeepers service board for enhanced services over a wide variety of issues.

In summary, the community perceived crime to be increasing due to an overwhelming belief its causes were related to intoxication/substance abuse; occurring in homes, with a strong belief of domestic violence. Overall, there was a neutral feeling of safety (50%). All respondents were residents of the community, with a slight majority being women over the age of 30 years of age.

Questions on Peacekeeper presence performance indicated a greater need to see more presence and patrols in neighborhoods at night. Written comments collected added areas such as the Quarry, local bars/social clubs and areas out of sight such as behind schools, buildings and churches. A significant amount of comments also were gathered to report a lack of feeling of safety due to the increased tobacco stores and manufacturers that bring many undesirables into the community that may add to additional crime. In addition, respondents reports that

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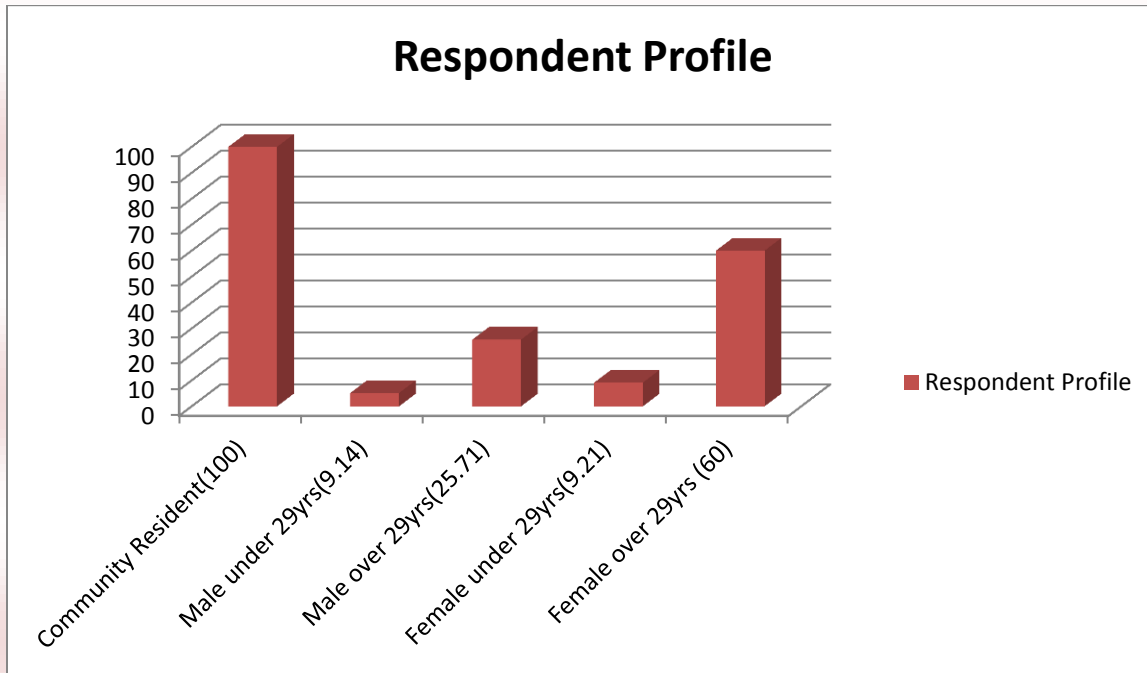
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there are too many bars in the community with no laws to regulate how many bars or areas where they can be built, in addition to an increase in gambling businesses, added to feeling less safe and secure in the community.

It was acknowledged that the community needs more peacekeeper staff to properly manage the community's safety and security needs. Officers need to be in more places, do more in the way of community involvement, but a general understanding fell to the notion that this may not necessarily be a Peacekeeping problem, rather a lack of reoccurring finances that would be preventing the hiring of more officers to patrol the community.

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## RESPONDENT PROFILE





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## QUESTION BREAKDOWN STATISTICS

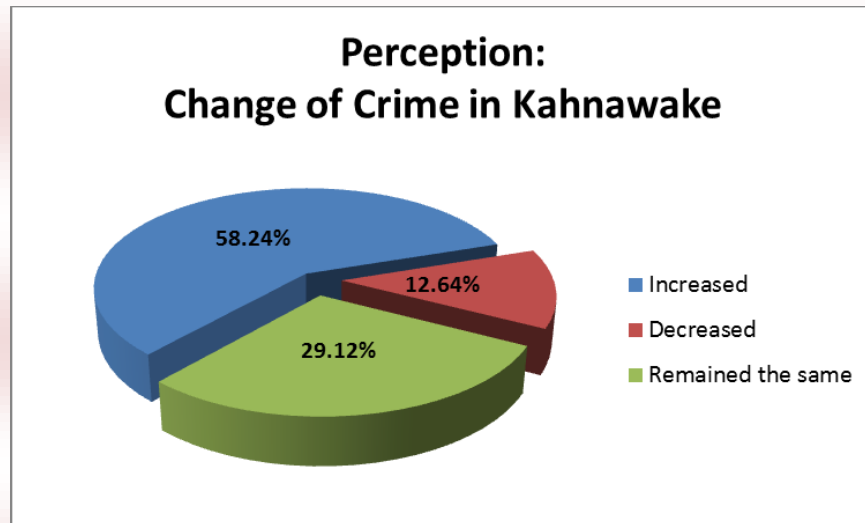
### QUESTION 1:

1. Over the last five years, do you think crime in Kahnawake has increased, decreased or remained the same?

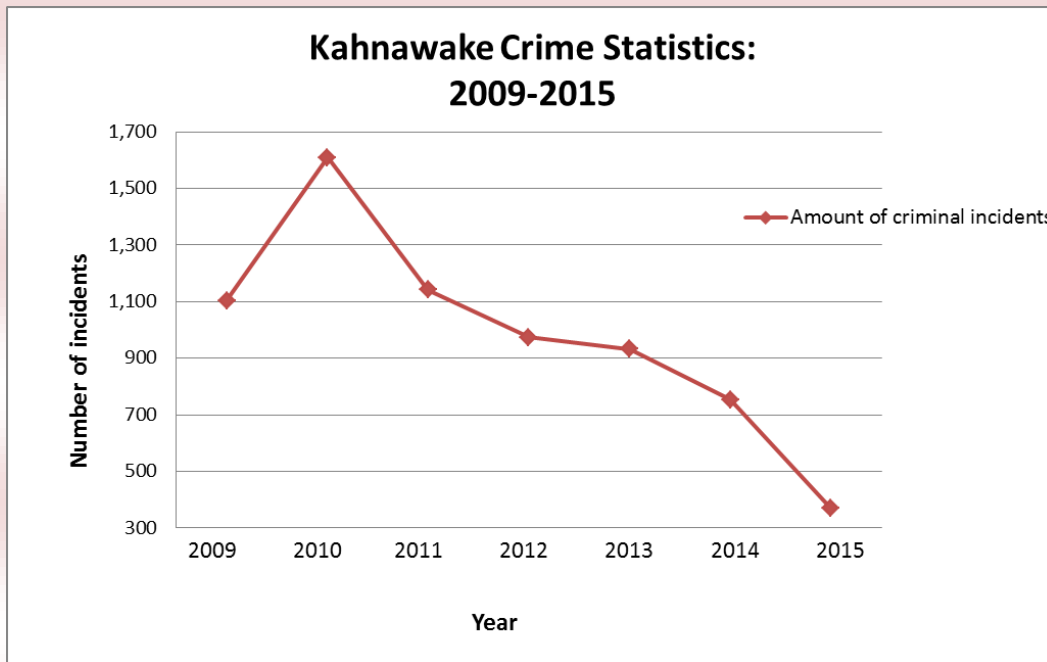
Increased: **58.24%**

Decreased: **12.64%**

Remained the same: **29.12%**



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## Kahnawake Crime Rates:

The graph above graph shows the actual crime rates in Kahnawake from 2009-2015 has been slightly decreasing since experiencing a peak in 2010<sup>1</sup>. Despite actual data, the majority (58.24%) of the respondents polled perceive that crime has increased over the last five years. While 29.12% believe that crime has maintained the same and a small portion of respondents believe it has decreased.

## Analysis:

A possible reason for this misperception could be the lack of information and education given to the community about crime rates. No crime statistics have ever been provided to the community by the Peacekeeper administration. No concrete reason was provided by the current (Chief Peacekeeper) other than he was never directed to release crime rates. As a result, responses from respondents polled on crime rates was purely based on their own perception and influenced by factors such as what they hear and see published in local media, rather than on available statistics.

<sup>1</sup> Kahnawake Peacekeepers crime statistics

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## ***QUESTION 2: Where do you think crime is most occurring in Kahnawake?***

### **RESULTS:**

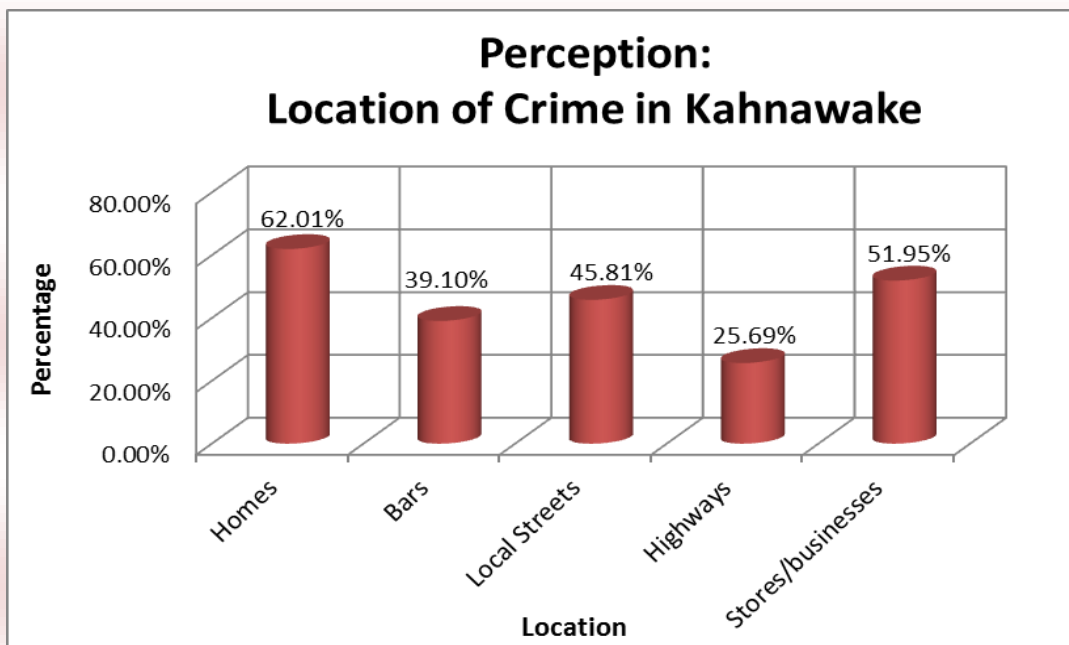
Homes: **62.01%**

Bars: **39.10%**

Local Streets: **45.81%**

Highways: **25.69%**

Stores/businesses: **51.95%**



### **Analysis:**

In order to obtain a deeper understanding of community perception on crime, respondents were asked ***where*** they believe crime is occurring in Kahnawake. The *location* of crime is also an indication of where the community perceives more Peacekeeper presence and additional crime prevention initiatives are needed to reduce “crime rates” and promote trust and overall feeling safety and security within the community.

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The majority of respondents (62.01%) perceived that most crimes are occurring in the home, which also correlates to written concerns left in the comment section that cites domestic violence and child safety as the most concerning areas of crime.

However, in 2014, there were 7 criminal incidents related to domestic violence and 9 custody dispute incidents, while there were 105 assault charges, which of, a number could have been related to domestic violence. In addition, it was significantly noted on the comments section that respondents knew of cases of unreported domestic violence situations. As a result respondents, both written and verbal expressed that they feel domestic violence is a growing crime area. However, actual criminal charges laid were relatively low while perceptions of these crimes are high, which could indicate a large number of unreported domestic crimes have been occurring, and or lack crime statistics provided to the community causes the discrepancy between community concern and actual real data. For this area, a discrepancy exists with regard to community perception/concern and actual crime rates in the area of domestic violence.

The second largest area of crime occurrences reported by respondents was related to crimes against stores/businesses (51.95%). This perception could be due to the fact that in recent years multiple cigarette stores and other businesses in Kahnawake have been the target of robberies, theft, break & enters and vandalism. In addition to having multiple media outlets publicly amplified (K103 each hour, two newspapers, two social media pages, and three television broadcasts) the incidents. Overall the results from this question highlight community issues and concerns that seem to be addressed through a greater police presence in various areas populated with businesses.

Respondents also included in the comments section of the survey, that they felt an area of crime concern was home and car break in and thefts. Store and business break-ins were perceived to be high due to the unregulated cigarette industry and or an increased vulnerability of stores (easy targets) isolated along the highway with a lot of money and no security systems. In addition to extremely high media attention for cigarette store and business break in's, respondents identified the following areas where they felt crime is occurring in Kahnawake (highest to lowest);

1. Local bars/clubs (reoccurring comment)
2. Quarry
3. Kateri Island

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4. Local schools (Bullying) (i.e survival school where some respondents felt that there is no control or discipline)
5. Tiowero:ton (reoccurring comment)
6. Open spaces: school yards, green spaces
7. Sports Complex

Both survey results and written comments included a high perception of crime occurring in local bars/clubs due to what they felt was absence of a law to control the amount of bars in and that bar and social clubs are going unpatrolled by Peacekeepers.

Respondents also felt that the areas of the most crime occurrences were also the same areas with the lowest police presence.

### **QUESTION 3: What do you think is the biggest cause of crime in Kahnawake?**

Un-employment: **40.33%**

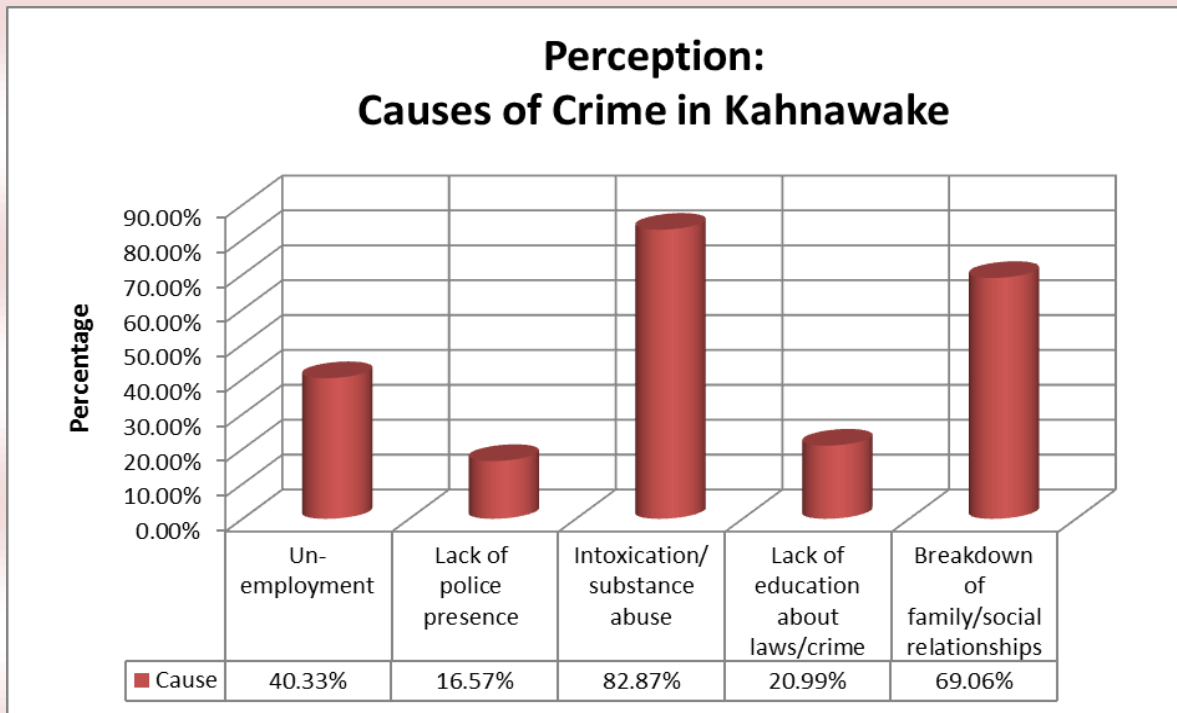
Lack of police presence: **16.57%**

Intoxication/substance abuse: **82.87%**

Lack of education about laws/crime: **20.99%**

Breakdown of family/social relationships: **69.06%**

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## Analysis:

Community input regarding the causes of crime was important to analyze in order to understand the perception of underlying social issues. The question was designed to obtain insight into what the community thinks about the causes of crime and whether it is related to Peacekeeper performance or socially occurring factors.

For example, opinions such as lack of police presence and lack of education about laws/crime are variables related to perceptions over Peacekeeper’s performance. In comparison, options such as un-employment and breakdown of family/social relationships are outside influences that are related to larger community issues at hand. However, results show that an overwhelming majority (82.87%) of the population perceives intoxication/substance abuse as a major cause of crime in Kahnawake. This variable, outside the scope of Peacekeeper performance, could be impacted through drug awareness and crime prevention initiatives since it is believed to be a leading cause of crime. Although, statistics does not support that drugs are the leading causes of crime, it is the leading concern of the community.

Breakdowns in family/social relationships were also perceived to be a causation of crime. Results for lack of police presence and lack of education about laws/crime were low, revealing

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that the community perceives crime as an issue not related to Peacekeeper performance, rather due to social problems.

## QUESTION 4

QUESTION 4: Please rate how concerned you are with each crime occurring in Kahnawake:

1. Drugs
2. Domestic violence
3. Youth crime
4. Break in Enters-theft
5. Vandalism-graffiti
6. Violent crime
7. Intoxicated drivers
8. Organized crime
9. Speeding
10. Loose dogs

Community members were asked to rate their crime concerns on a scale from 1 (highest priority) to 10 (lowest priority) in order to identify community perception about which crimes require the most attention. This question also gives insight into which crimes occur most frequently according to community members.

Drugs, violent crime and domestic violence were among the crimes rated with the highest priority. These results are consistent with the previous question's results, showing a pattern of concern among substance abuse issues and domestic violence. Drugs peaked as the number one crime concern among community members, in 2014 there were 45 criminal incidents in Kahnawake directly related to drugs (possession, trafficking, cultivation and suspicious activity) and an unknown amount of other various criminal incidents in which drugs were involved.

## QUESTION 5:

*Question (5) was arranged from 1 to 10: numbers closer to 1 was considered as the highest concern, while numbers closer to 10 were viewed as the least.*

- Violent crime: **3.87 average rating**
- Youth crime: **5.25 average rating**

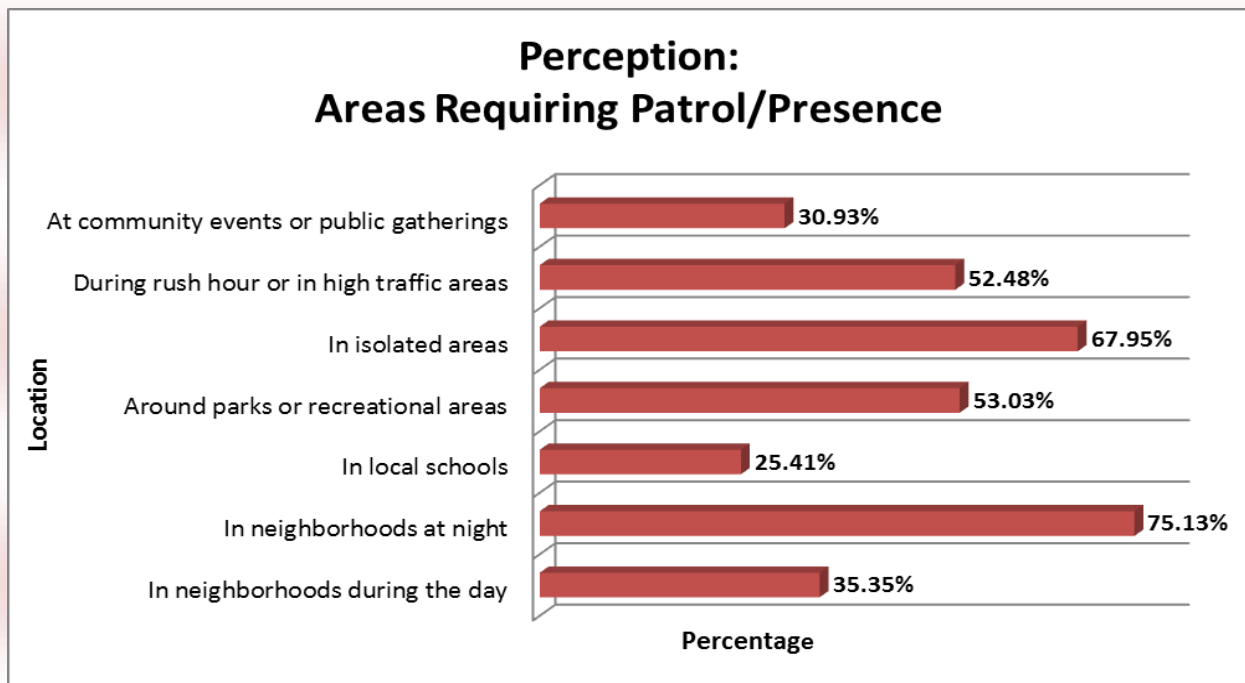
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- Domestic violence: **4.60 average rating**
- Loose dogs: **8.25 average rating**
- Drugs: **3.5 average rating**
- Speeding: **6.72 average rating**
- Organized crime: **5.04 average rating**
- Vandalism/graffiti: **7.41 average rating**
- Break ins/theft: **5.53 average rating**
- Intoxicated drivers: **4.77 average rating**

QUESTION 5.1:

## 5. In what areas do you feel like more Kahnawake Peacekeeper presence or patrol is needed?

- In neighborhoods during the day: **35.35%**
- In neighborhoods at night: **75.13%**
- In local school: **25.41%**
- Around parks or recreational areas: **53.03%**
- In isolated areas: **67.95%**
- During rush hour or in high traffic areas: **52.48%**
- At community events or public gatherings: **30.93%**



### Analysis:



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This question was designed to determine community perception on the nature of Peacekeeper patrol and presence. The results from this question are useful to provide direct recommendations to the Peacekeepers regarding areas of Kahnawake that the community feels requires more patrol. The areas of concern according to the results are as follows;

1. In neighborhoods at night (75.13%);
2. In isolated areas (67.95%);
3. During rush hour or in high traffic areas (52.48%);

The community's perception is associated with the general belief that majority of crimes occur at night and in isolated areas opposed to during the day and in populated areas.

More relevant to Kahnawake as a community, isolated areas of concern mentioned in comments are;

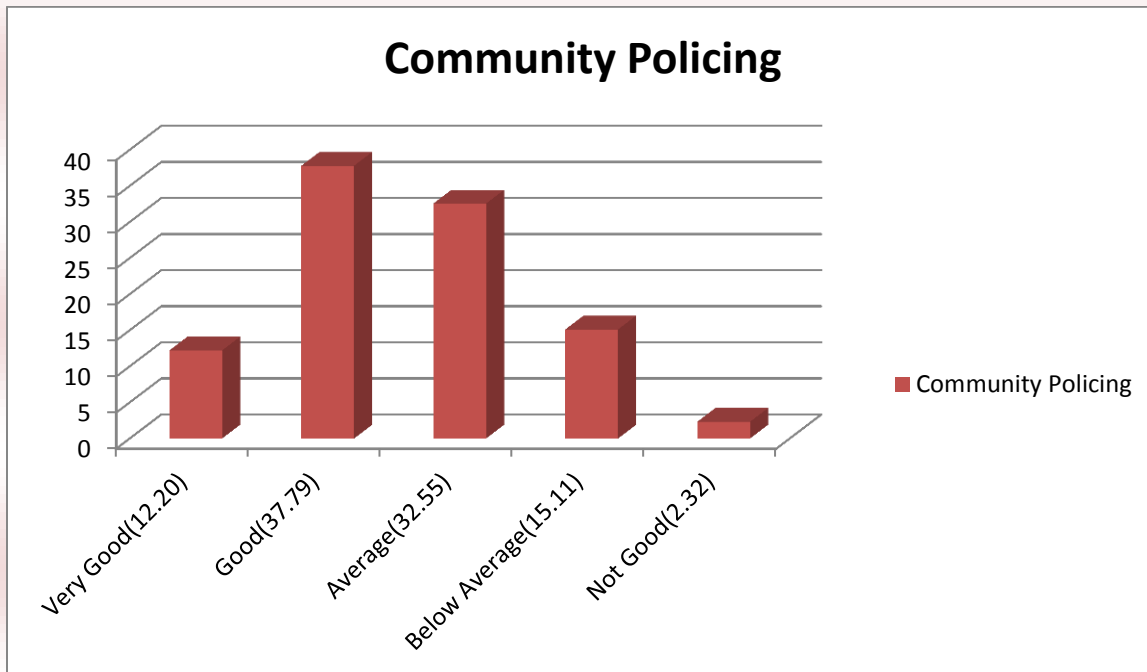
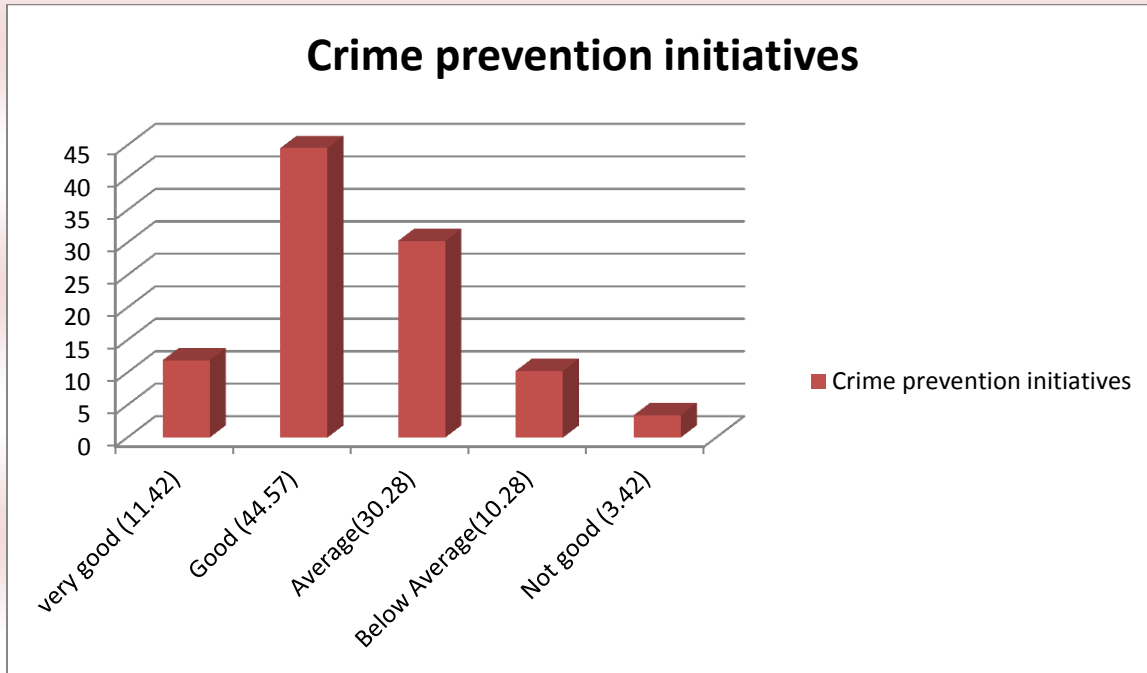
- Quarry;
- Back roads;
- Abandoned buildings;
- Kateri Island (night);

In addition, the demand for more Peacekeeper presence during rush hour or in high traffic areas with construction and detours around the Mercier Bridge has been high. Road ways designated for 'local residents only' have been significantly overrun by non-locals, which have created greater tensions and traffic, increases the community perception for these areas being problematic and needing more Peacekeeper presence.

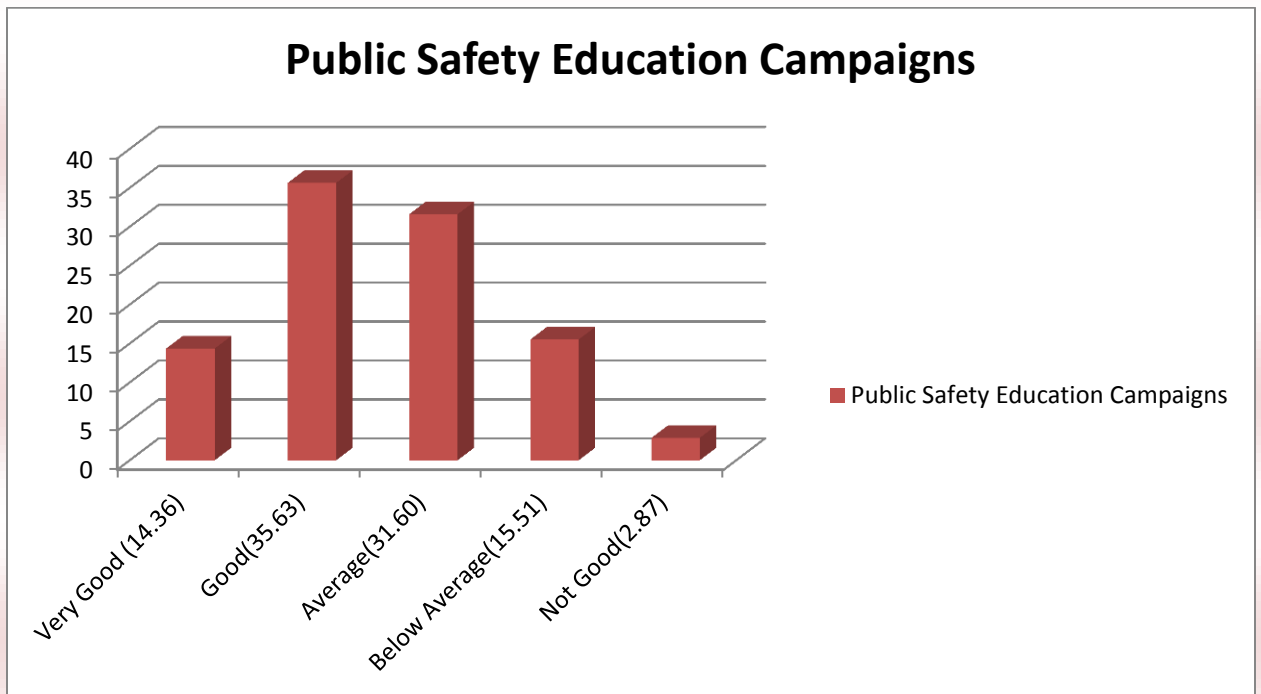
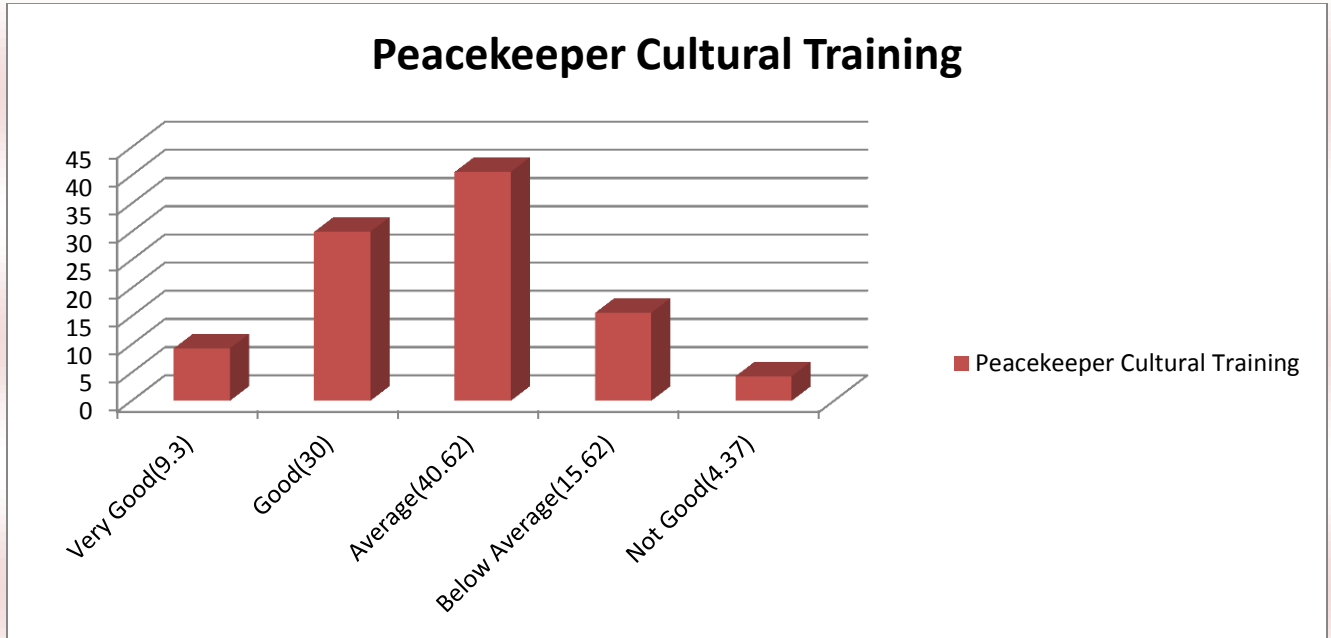
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## Question 6:

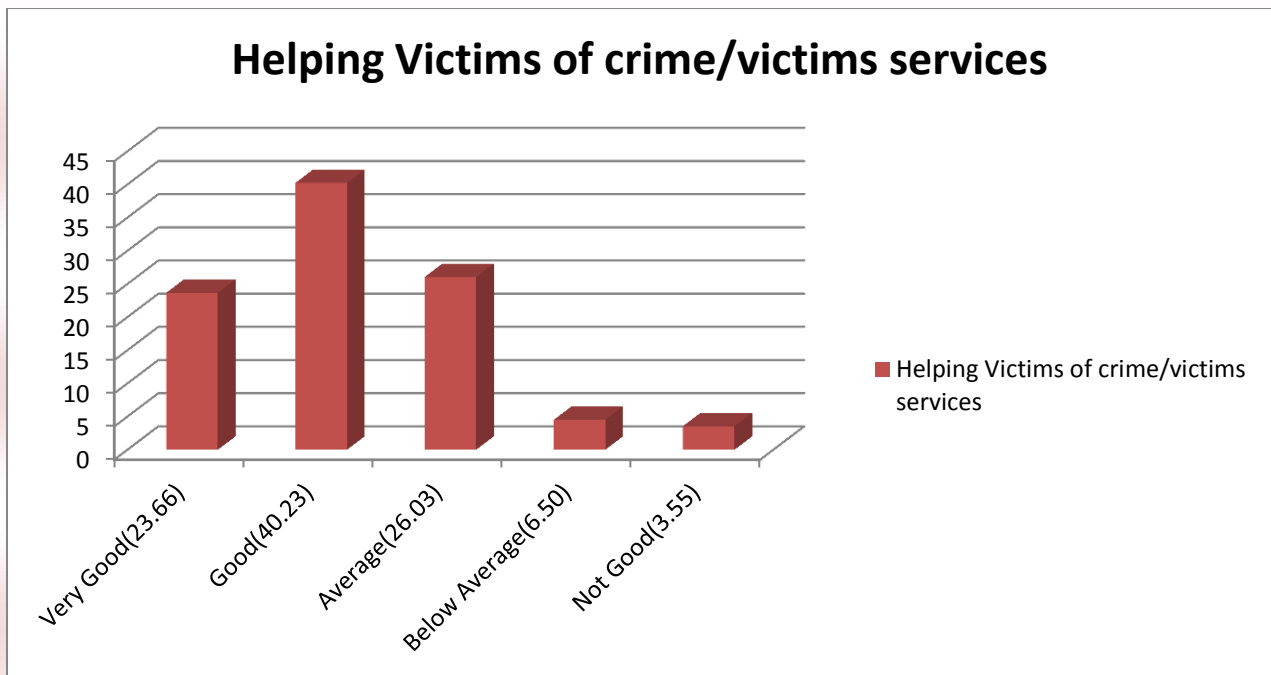
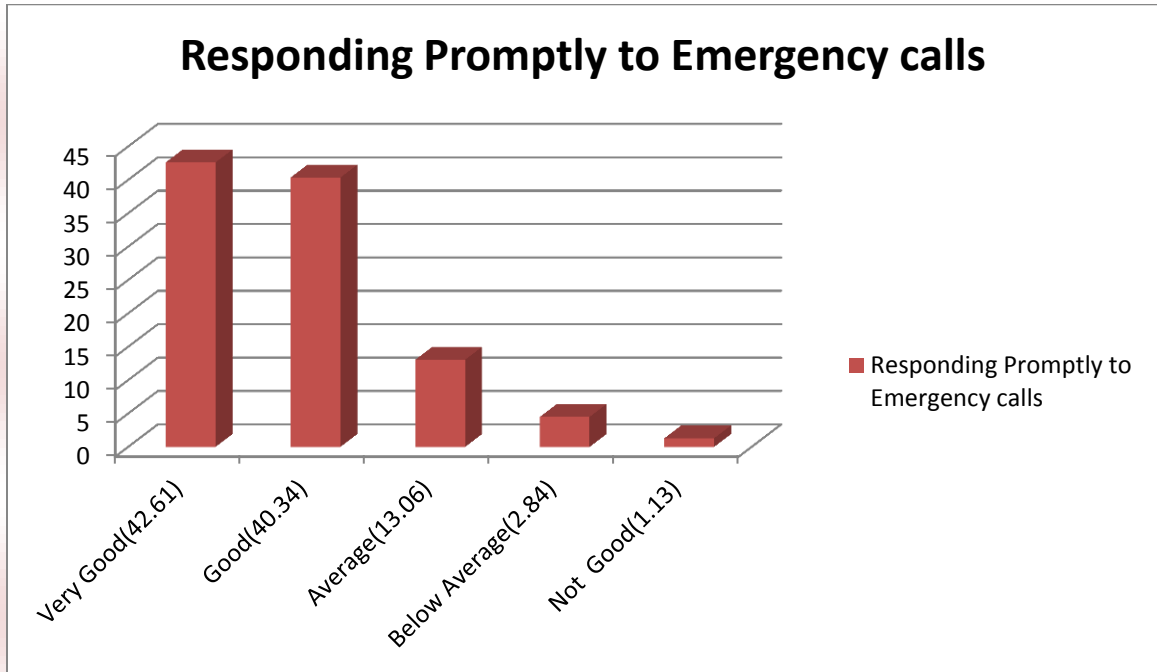
***How do you rate the current efforts of the Kahnawake Peacekeepers on the following:***



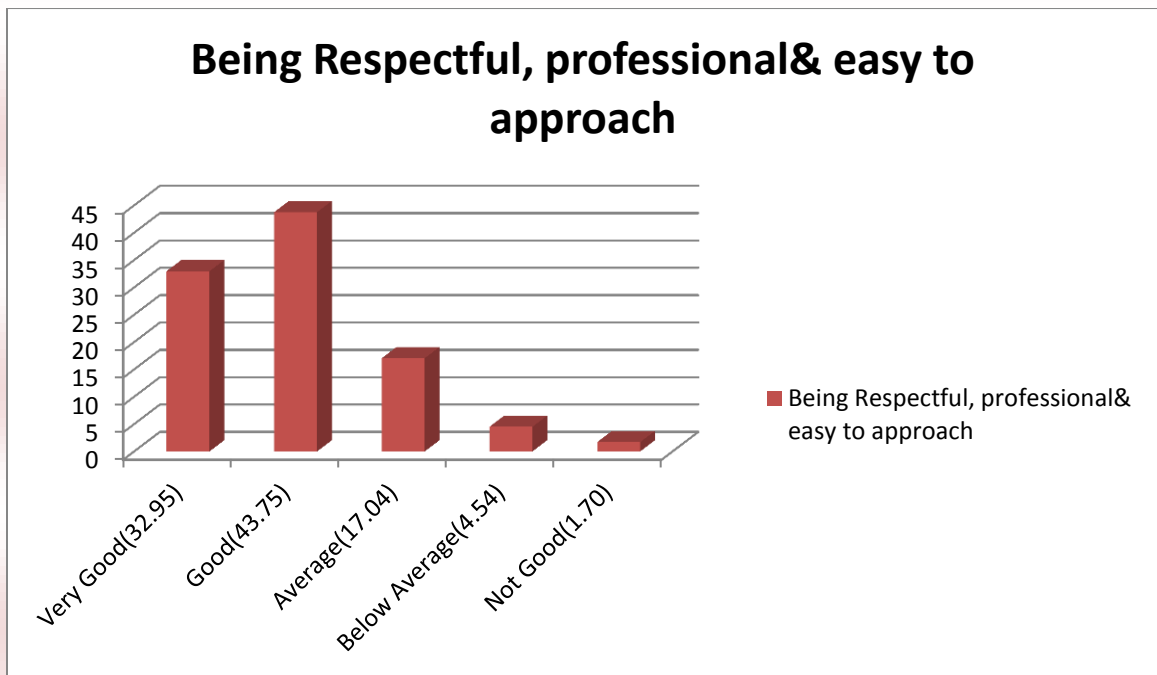
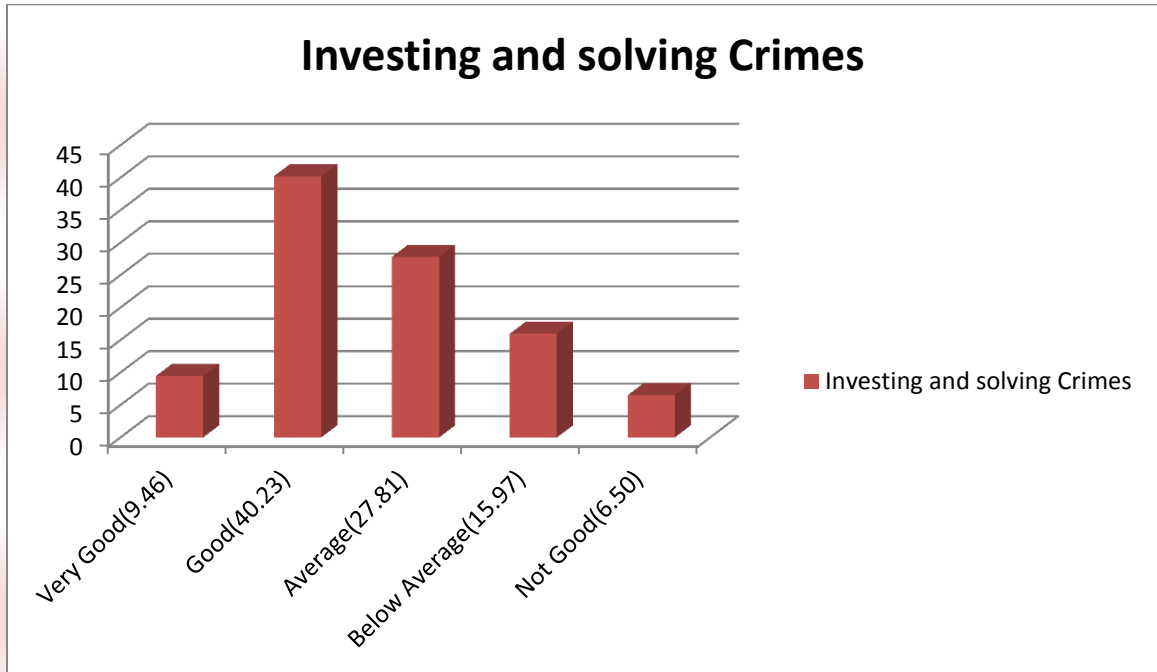
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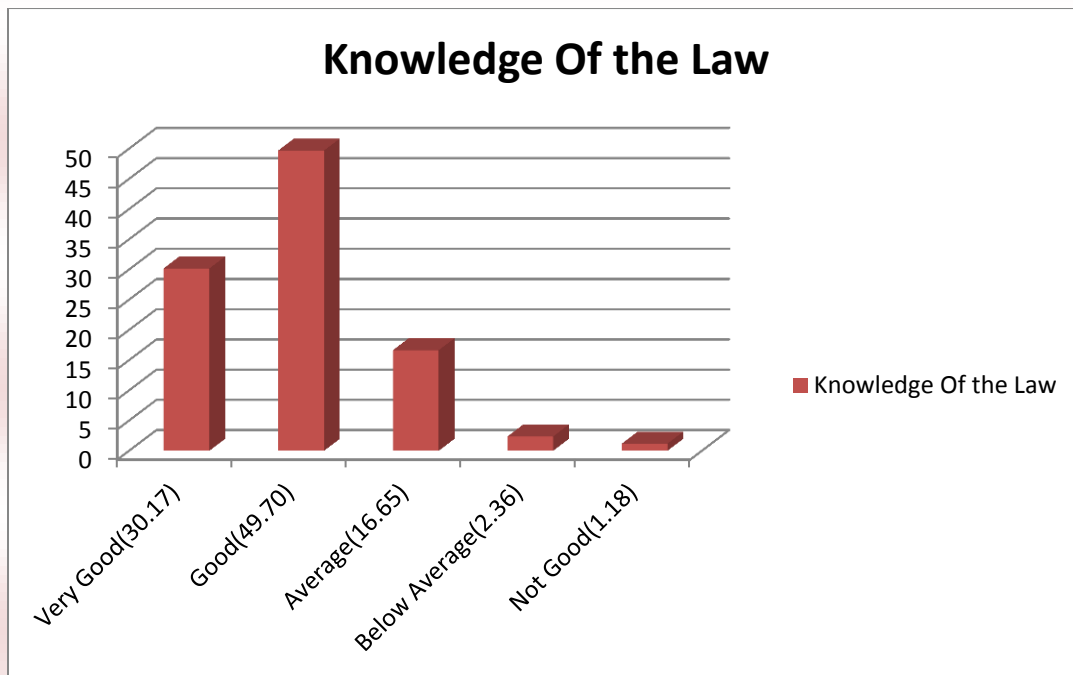
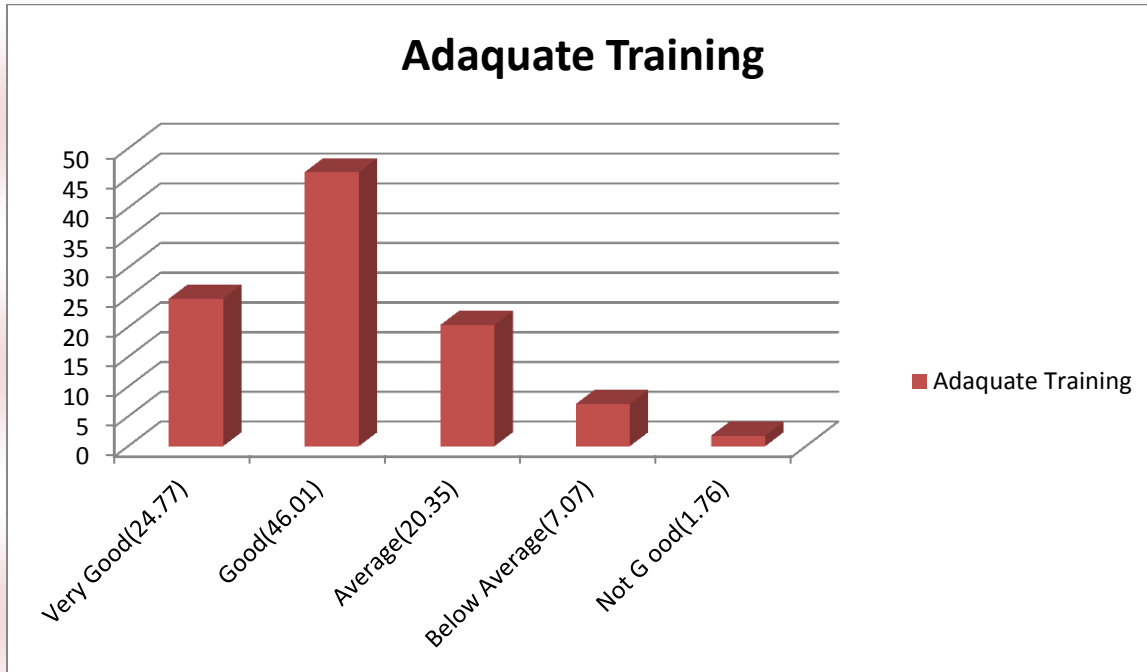
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# Public Safety Consultation Project: Community Perspectives on Policing and Crime within the Mohawk Territory of Kahnawake



Analysis:

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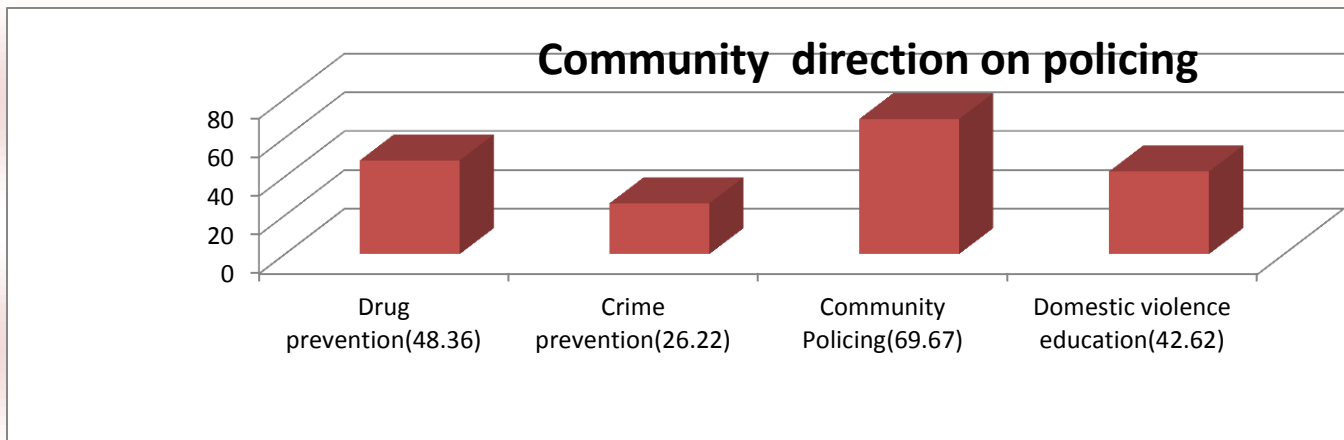
Community members were asked to rate various efforts of the Kahnawake Peacekeepers on a rating scale ranging from not good to very good. This question was posed in order to gain a better understanding how the community views the level of services and performance provided by the Peacekeepers. The question was also designed to determine which areas of the Kahnawake Peacekeeper performance needed to be improvement.

Overall, the average community member responded with “good” to each indicator of performance, reflecting that there is a generally average level of satisfaction with the Kahnawake Peacekeepers effort. In particular, 42.61% of the population rated responding promptly to emergency calls as very good. However, a few indicators reflected less than satisfactory, such as investigations and solving crimes, victim services and Peacekeeper cultural training.

The results indicate which areas of Peacekeeper performance respondents felt a need for improvement (solving crimes, victims services & Peacekeeper cultural training).

## QUESTION 6:

6. Please rate each crime prevention initiative based on what you would most like to see implemented in Kahnawake:



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## **Analysis:**

Respondents were asked to rate various types of crime prevention initiatives they would like to see implemented by the Peacekeepers. Results would indicate various areas the community felt were important to promote as part of their policing initiatives.

**The highest area** respondents wanted to see the Peacekeepers Implement was Community Policing initiatives (various activities related to interaction between the community and Peacekeepers). This was related to more presence at community functions and or more public campaigns on prevention strategies related to safety, crime prevention and substance abuse.

**The second highest** area of activity respondents wanted to see implemented by the Peacekeepers was related to drug prevention initiatives (48.36).

**The third** area was Domestic violence education (42.62) Domestic violence issues also generated many written and verbal comments and concerns. Comments received centered on knowing women in violent domestic environments, but kept incidents unreported for many reasons. In addition, 60.71% of female respondents rated crime prevention initiatives aimed at women/domestic violence as one of their top 3 priorities. Respondents indicated that more public education and information was needed to help many unreported situations concerning domestic violence.

**The fourth area** of peacekeeping direction focused on Crime prevention education targeting the youth (26.22) at both the elementary and high school level. It was also noted, that some elementary and high school aged children don't attend local schools, and wanted to see those youth involved as well in various initiatives outside the school year and setting.

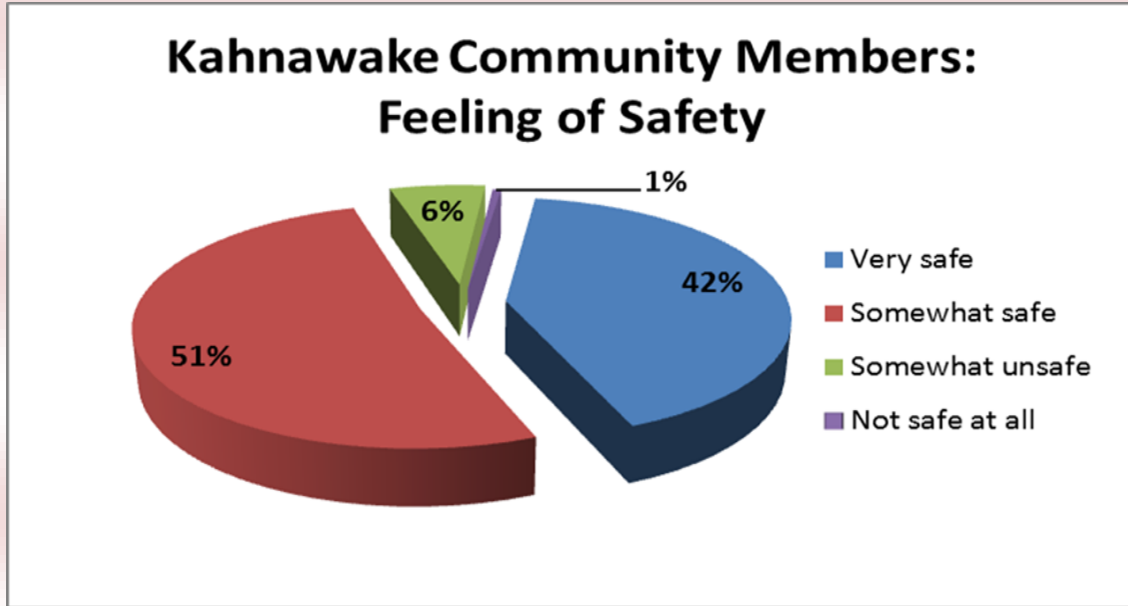


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## QUESTION 8:

Question 8: How safe do you feel in Kahnawake?



Results show that (51.43%) of respondents feel somewhat safe, (42.71%) feel very safe, while only 7% of the population reported feeling less than safe (either somewhat unsafe or not safe at all).

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## **POLICY RECCOMENDATIONS FOR THE KAHNAWAKE PEACEKEEPER SERVICE BOARD**

Community members were asked to rate their crime concerns on a scale from 1 (highest priority) to 10 (lowest priority) in order to identify community perception about which crimes require the most attention. This question also gives insight into which crimes occur most frequently according to community members.

Based on the Community perception of drug related crime, violence (including domestic violence) seems to be the highest areas of concern for crime occurrences within the community for the respondents polled. These results also show a pattern of concern in the written comments section as well who reported substance abuse issues and domestic violence as highest areas of concern for crime. Various written and verbal complaints centered on the smell of drugs and drug dealers living within the community as very high. In addition, to knowing of many individuals in unreported domestic violence situations.

Overall, the community consultation project yielded key results that will lend toward providing effective recommendations to the peacekeepers service board for enhanced services over a wide variety of issues. One of the most recurring results; leaned toward a lack of open, public communication between the community and the peacekeepers. Results for specific peacekeeper activity in relation to crime prevention initiatives or community based policing strategies were seen to be lacking. Community members reported having a difficult time completing a portion of the survey that asked their perception on various efforts aimed at public education, crime prevention and community engagement. Although many verbal and written comments reported recent community engagement efforts launched by the Peacekeepers (monthly noon hour talk shows on local radio station: K103), were received very positively.

The community expressed through verbal and written comments, a desire to see more public information provided on crime and various information strategies aimed at educating the community on issues previously unaware of (i.e process for ATV registration, boat safety, and highway safety infractions).

This survey also concluded that, community policing and crime prevention initiatives should be increased in certain areas for specific reasons. Much concern was expressed over issues such as substance abuse or substance related crimes, domestic violence and youth engagement due to a few important factors;

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1. No actual annual crimes rates have ever been released to the community;
2. High media presence in the community puts some offenses at the forefront, leading the community to believe more serious crime is occurring all the time;
3. Police presence in schools does occur, however;
  - a. It is not structured each year as an expected on going initiative (or program)
  - b. It only targets KSS highway school (primarily);
  - c. Little or no media coverage is there to inform the community, as result it appears that the Peacekeepers rarely engage with the youth.
  - d. Peacekeeper engagement is structured as relationship building (providing Peacekeeper presence in schools for awareness of Bullying and drug use). They are also encouraged to drop by the school during lunch and on breaks for the local high school.
4. Crime prevention programs for high school and elementary youth have not yet been Created and implemented.
5. Domestic violence has been indicated in this report as an area of concern on two fronts;
  - a. Campaigns on domestic violence have been led in the past by KSCS (Community services), not the Peacekeepers. The link between domestic violence and illegality could be strengthened through information campaigns hosted by the Peacekeepers.
  - b. There exists a fear of reporting domestic violence, as evidenced through many verbal and written comments provided during this survey; which suggests that domestic violence could be a high crime area that is left unreported.
6. No annual report/crime statistics is released to the community on community engagement initiatives, making it difficult for the community to understand what activities the Peacekeepers engage in with the community/youth or what the reality of crime is in the community.

Based on the data collected, it is recommended that the Peacekeeper Service Board institute policy initiatives based on the following community policing and crime prevention initiatives.

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- 1 Crime prevention initiatives targeting substance abuse
- 2 Crime prevention initiatives aimed at women/domestic violence
- 3 Crime prevention initiatives aimed at youth
- 4 Community-police relationship building activities/programs/events