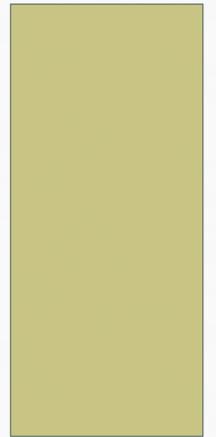


COMMUNITY OUTREACH

EPS MEMBERS ON THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH THE SOMALI DIASPORA

DR. SANDRA BUCERIUS, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
DR. SARA THOMPSON, RYERSON UNIVERSITY

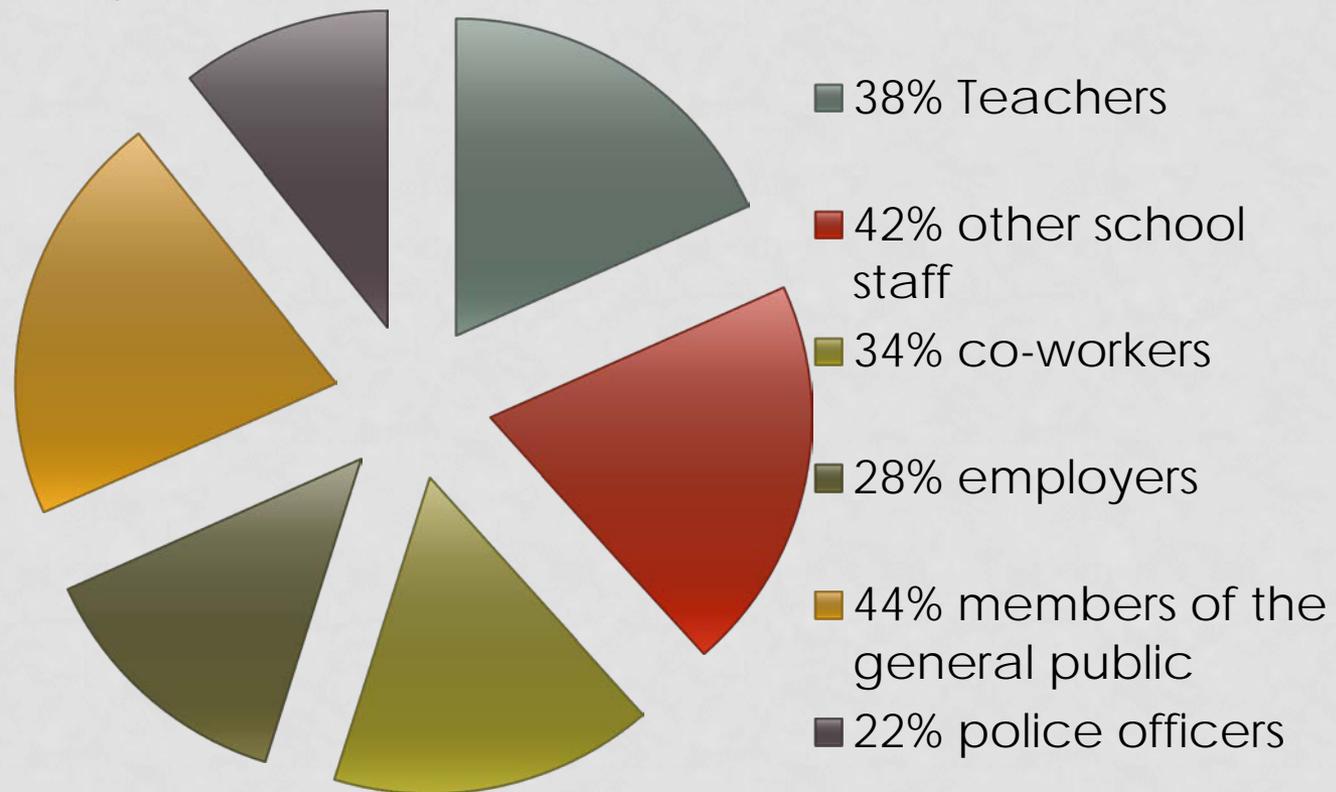


STUDY PHASE 1

- Two Kanishka/Public Safety funded studies
- Qualitative interviews and surveys with young adults (16-30) of the Somali diaspora in Edmonton (301 interviews/surveys) and Toronto (118 interviews)
- Community participatory approach, community members involved in data collection and analysis
- Broader study looked at:
 - Experiences of discrimination in Canadian society
 - Key issues facing the Somali diaspora in each city
 - Perceptions of al Shabaab
 - Perceptions of police and the efficacy of policing strategies

DISCRIMINATION BY MEMBERS OF SOCIETY IN EDMONTON

(Note that respondents could indicate multiple members, these percentages refer to the proportion of *responses* that included that particular actors, not the proportion of respondents).

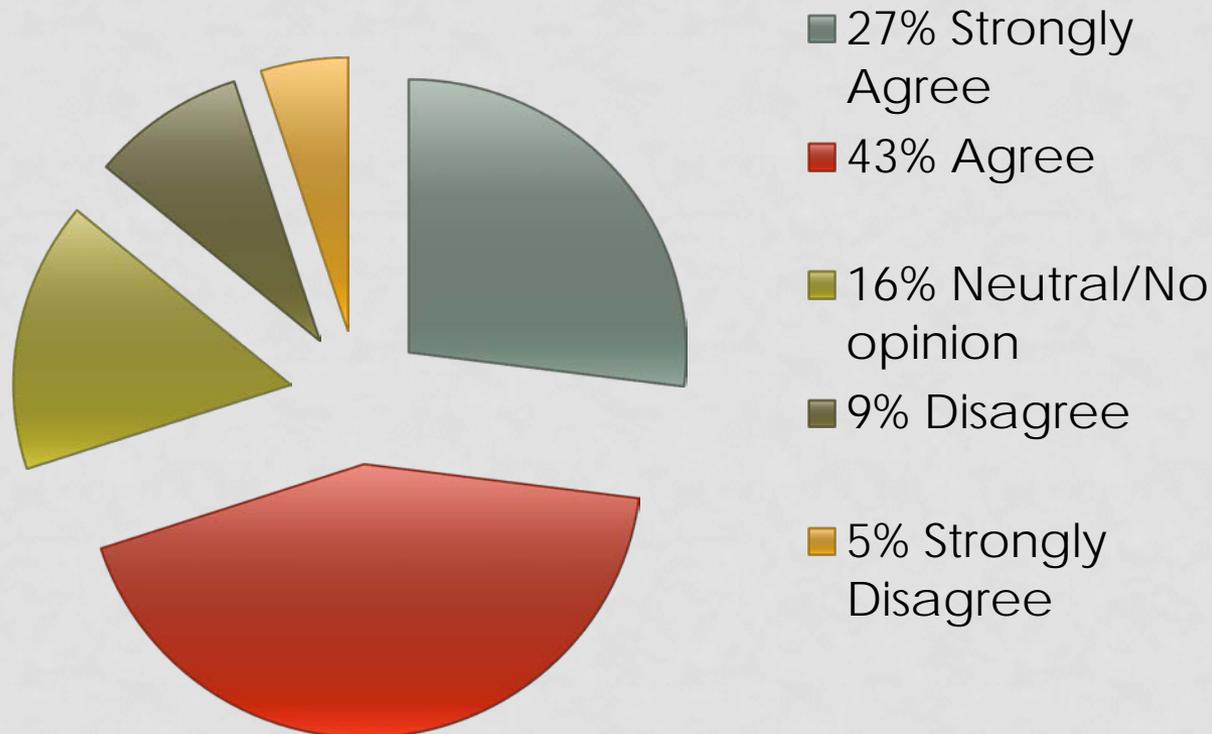


PLACES WHERE DISCRIMINATION OCCURRED IN EDMONTON

(Note that respondents could indicate multiple spaces of discrimination, these percentages refer to the proportion of *responses* that included that site, not the proportion of respondents).

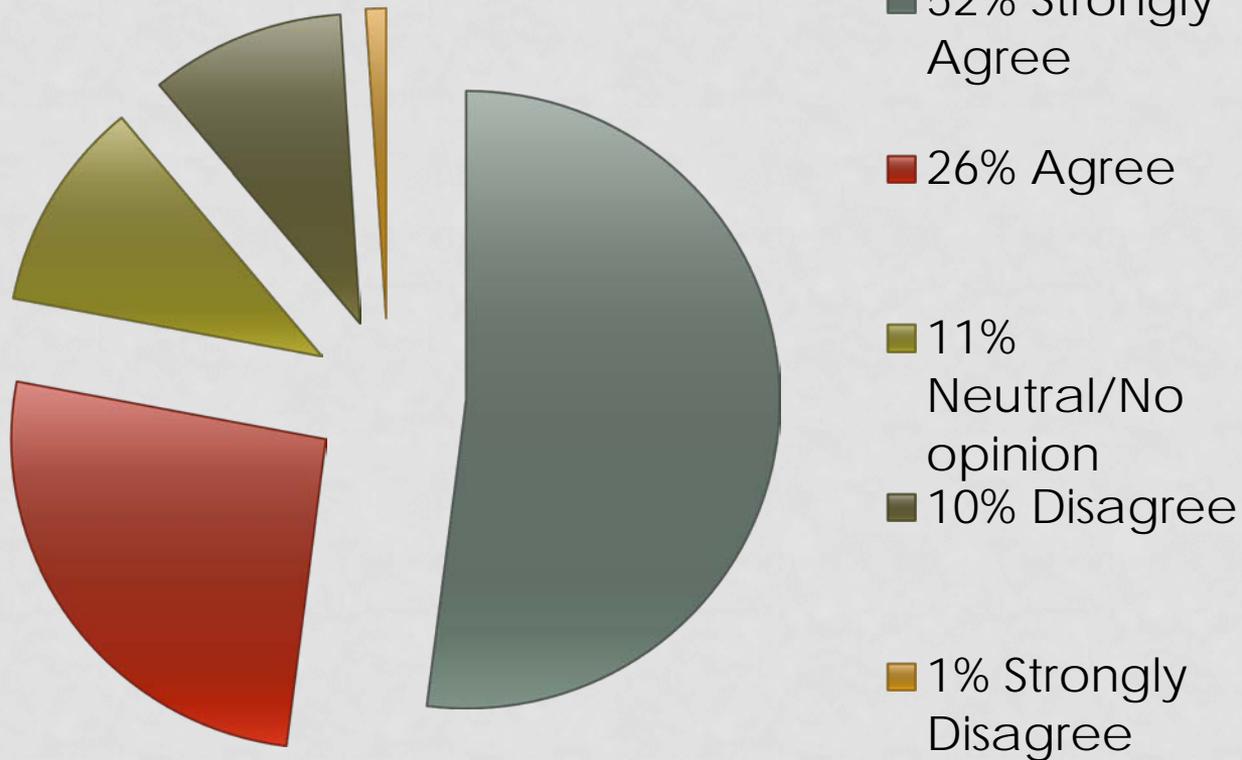
KEY ISSUES FOR THE COMMUNITY

- A difficult relationship with police is a key issue that the Somali-Canadian community is facing



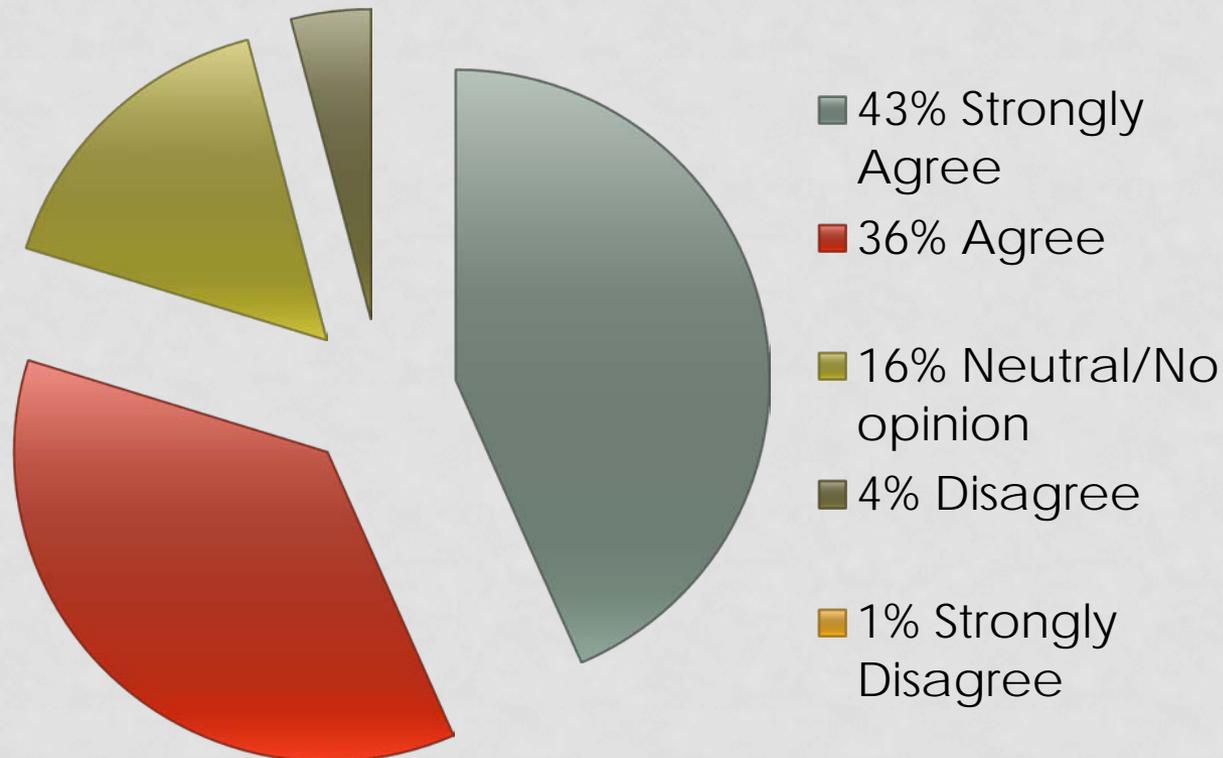
KEY ISSUES FOR THE COMMUNITY

- Unsolved homicides is an issue that the Somali-Canadian community is facing



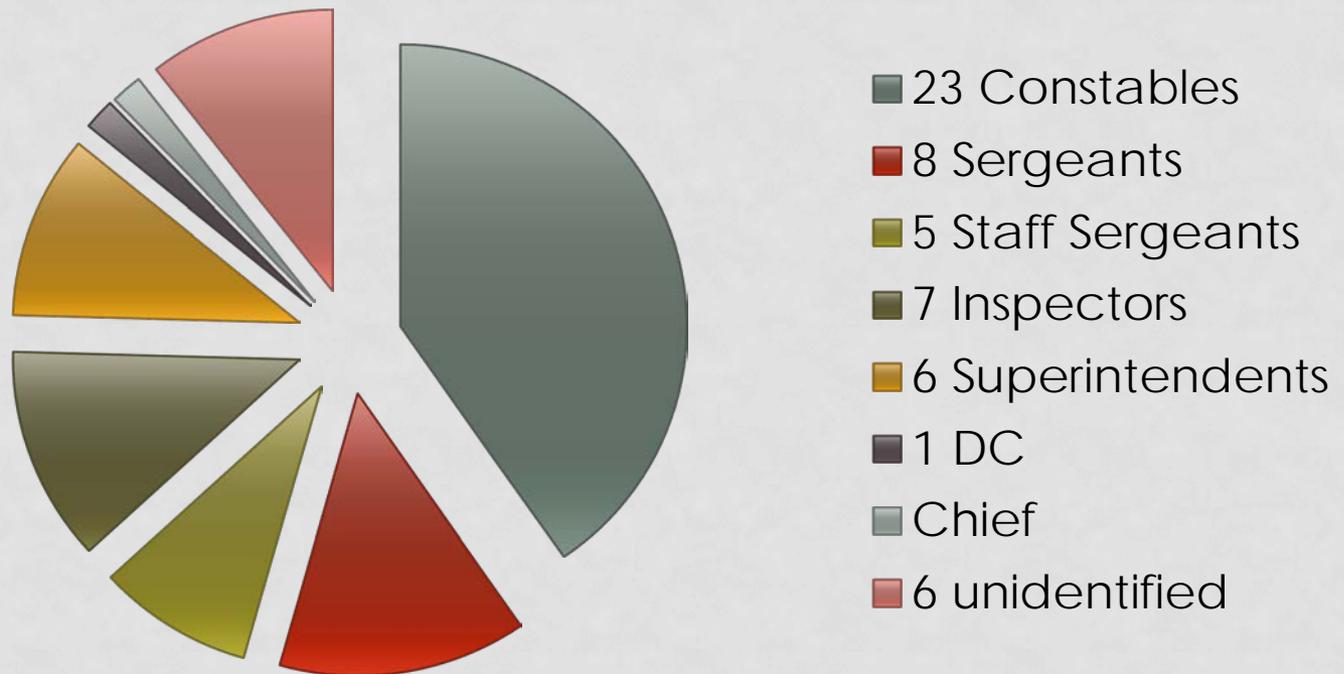
KEY ISSUES FOR THE COMMUNITY

- Violence is an issue that the Somali-Canadian community is facing



STUDY PHASE 2

- 57 in-depths interviews with EPS members across all ranks and five divisions (excluding South East)
- 22 questions, interviews between 18 and 92 minutes



KEY THEMES

- Knowledge about the Somali community
- General emphasis of policing
- General thoughts on building relationships with community members
- The role of training
- Relationship with the Somali community in Edmonton
- Approach to policing radicalization

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE SOMALI COMMUNITY

- Members have basic knowledge about Somali community
- Members are not necessarily aware that Somalis are predominately Muslims
- Broad awareness of the disadvantaged position the community occupies in Canadian society
- Areas of concern: violent crime, gang-related activity, and domestic violence
- Radicalization not identified as concern

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE SOMALI COMMUNITY

- The majority of Constables, including Beat Officers, believe that having more knowledge about the community would significantly help them
- *"I am at that arrest, and the guy is completely agitated. Freaking out and going nuts. And my colleagues became increasingly concerned because here you have this guy freaking out and becoming aggressive. And then I saw that the Quaran was lying on the ground – the guy just wanted to pick it up. But my colleagues did not pick up on this, because they don't know the rules. So, he got to pick up the Quaran and was cooperating after. Rules like that, we need to know them. No one teaches that stuff!"*

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE SOMALI COMMUNITY

- Members wish for more training on specific cultural groups versus “generic multiculturalism”, but it needs to be offered “tactfully”.
- *“If they rammed [the training] down the guys’ throats saying, “You guys aren’t culturally sensitive to Somalis, you need to take this training,” guys are going to push back saying, “Screw that, we’re culturally sensitive to everybody.” But if they sold it in a different manner that was less forceful and a little bit more just, “This is training we are going to provide you so you can have some better interactions, help you deal with these people, it might be a little bit more beneficial, right?”*

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE SOMALI COMMUNITY

- While officers stressed that *“you can’t know everything about everyone”*, they also hoped for more information sharing between units and divisions and more training before taking a new position/beat.
 - *“It makes no sense that we get assigned a new beat and then you have to start from scratch. There should be a knowledge base. Information like: there are Somalis in your beat, here’s training on that community. And details, like... here is how you can engage people on that corner, here is something about the religion in that beat etc. If that information could be easily accessible, it would make our lives a lot easier. We basically need to learn everything on the job, a lot of trial and error.”*

GENERAL EMPHASIS ON POLICING

- Very strong community engagement mindset, supported and pushed by superiors and the Chief
- Building relationships is seen as expected, nothing special
- Many members explicitly state that they wanted to work for EPS *because of* its community oriented mindset
- Unreasonable use of force is not acceptable

GENERAL EMPHASIS ON POLICING

- Front line members feel time constraints impede with their outreach efforts
 - *We are already short on staff, we need so many more people on the ground with the city expanding at the rate it does. We have made such positive strides in working with communities, but if we don't have more people in these positions, we won't be able to keep it up."*
 - *"If you are running from call to call, you are just stressed. We have to be at our best because the people will always remember you, and we never meet them in good situation. When the police show up, it's a bad situation in your life. So, we have to be at our best. But when you are just putting out fires, you can't be at your best all the time".*

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- overwhelming majority emphasized that cultivating strong and trusting relationships with community members is the pre-requisite for good police work
- had concrete ideas as to how best to achieve this goal
 - importance of listening to and learning from community members (including victims)
 - initiating contacts/day to day conversations/eating at restaurants etc.
 - adapt policing strategies to their recommendations and needs
 - importance of establishing relationships in “good times”, before problems arise
 - domestic violence identified as area that needs most improvement.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- *"[...] our real work is in the good times. We need to make sure to work hard on our community ties in good times so that we can work with the community TOGETHER when the bad times come".*
- *" We had a serious event in the Aboriginal community... they said, "why didn't you call us, because we could've helped you?" It was true.... [it] never even occurred to us... so I think we're more attuned to that now [...]"*
- *" I'm speaking personally, not on behalf of Edmonton Police Service, but what I've found is trust can only be built on authentic caring and actually wanting to learn. Trust isn't built on the police educating the public. It's on the police asking question of the public and learning and growing."*

THE ROLE OF TRAINING

- Instilling a community oriented mindset during training is paramount
- Importance of “speed dating”
 - *“And this kind of training is huge. Because it really helps to give you a deeper understanding of different communities. For me, for example, I really learned a lot about Islam. I remember speaking to that Muslim woman about why she wears a hijab and it just gave me a totally different perspective. I think it made me a better officer. [...] Or my conversations with the member of the LGBTQ community. It made me aware of all the victimization in that community. I just had no idea.”*

THE ROLE OF TRAINING

- Several senior officers suggested that tactical experiences help in having the junior membership “buy into” community policing
 - *“I come out of tactical, so I’ve got a good reputation. If someone like me who was the pinnacle of high risk or high threat policing can say, this is really important to do, it adds credibility for the guys.”*

THE ROLE OF TRAINING

- Importance of exposure to social issues
- Importance of SERA project
- Teaching how to “care”
 - *“What I’ve come to see over my years is a lot of times, people don’t need police officers. They just need people who care. So when I have recruits, I always tell them: it takes the first year to figure out how to wear a uniform and be that presence, and you spend the rest of your career trying to make people forget you’re wearing one...”*

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOMALI COMMUNITY IN EDMONTON

- Statement by homicide detective identified as pivotal for changing the relationship with the Somali community (similarly identified as changing point by the Somali community itself)
- Somali community is still widely identified as “problem community”
 - *“I know now, in Edmonton in 2015, in the downtown core, [the Somali community is] the problem. They are the problem. I don’t want to say problem, but they are the troubled community... they have a spotlight on them.”*
- While there is more outreach: *“the [...] stereotypes aren’t gone by any stretch of the imagination.”*

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOMALI COMMUNITY IN EDMONTON

- Membership agrees that there has been more emphasis on outreach since the statement
 - Front line members believe outreach is predominately happening at the management level
 - *"They've definitely had a concerted effort from management to bridge that gap. Whether it has translated itself down to the street, I'm not so sure... there is still animosity with the members and the guys they are arresting."*
- Very diverse views on who has a better way to do outreach (Upper management or front line members)
 - Front line members widely believe that their outreach activities are more difficult because they deal with criminally involved people
 - Outreach with community leaders is viewed with mixed feelings
 - Youth Chief's advisory council may get at the voices of the young

APPROACH TO POLICING RADICALIZATION

- 39 officers had ideas about how to police radicalization
 - traditional policing tactics will not detect radicalization and that “infiltrating communities” is not an option to learn about radicalization
 - Building strong relationships is seen as primary tool
 - *“If we don’t have the trust of the community, we have nothing.”*
 - importance of tackling the media
 - Importance of looking at behaviour change
 - HUB model

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Leveraging Technology and Knowledge**

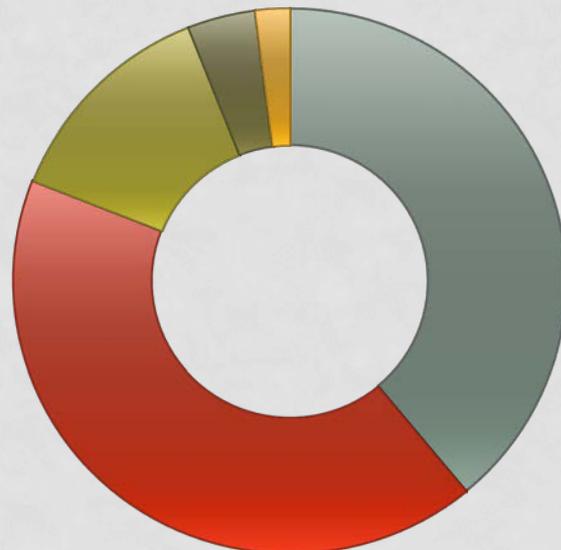
- “Our Diverse Communities” website or app
- Decentralizing EDHR’s goals throughout the organization, embedding EDHR practices on all aspects of policing and into the fabric of police culture.
- Contact points within respective divisions
- Reference guide
 - *“I don’t want to bring the EPS into disrepute... so when I’m dealing with those cultures or those cultural differences... I just really need somebody to say this is what you’re going to do, this is what you’re not going to do.”*

- **Training Days**

- More training and take away messages
 - *“There were a couple of training days where we talked about, or we had **white** (ironic emphasis) officers come in and talk to us about the African community, right (laughs)? “My experience with the African community...” or “Why not invite an African community member when talking to us about that community?”*

RECOMMENDATIONS

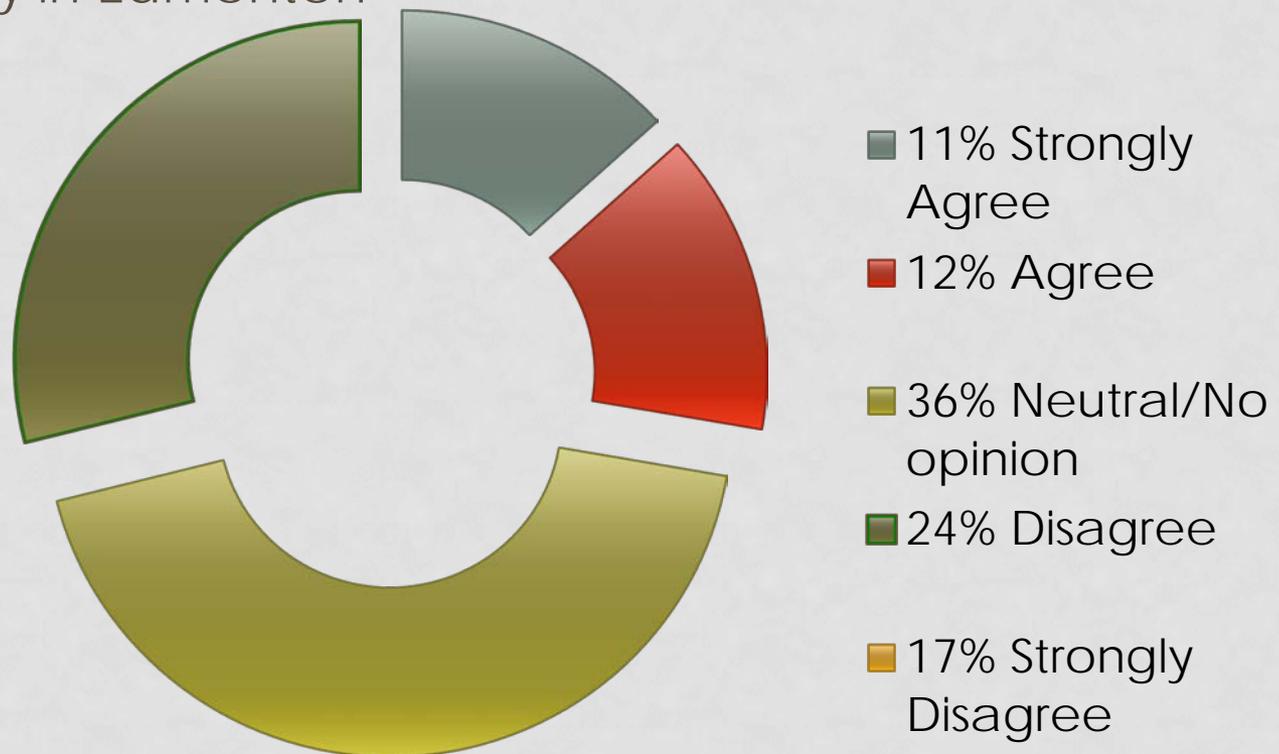
- More interactions and outreach with young people
- Survey data with 301 Somali Canadians, age 16-30
Interested in building stronger partnerships with the police in Edmonton?



- 39% strongly agree
- 42% Agree
- 13% Neutral/No opinion
- 4% Disagree
- 2% Strongly Disagree

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Survey data with 301 Somali Canadians, age 16-30
Police are doing everything they can to engage with the Somali community in Edmonton



WHY THIS MATTERS

- Police legitimacy is key when it comes to cooperation with the police
- Cultivation of trust and relationships between communities and police is paramount when it comes to sharing information

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- Training
 - Engaging women
 - Engaging youth
 - Creating safe spaces
-
- *We want a piece of the pie. We're currently not at the table, we're just on the menu.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implementation of HUB model that has a CVE component
 - coordinated, proactive interventions that identify and attend to risks before incidents occur.