



comunidadsegura

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Lessons from Latin America and the Caribbean

Social Development and the Prevention of Armed Violence

Shared EXPERIENCES

More than 740.000 people die every year as a result of armed violence. That is 1.5 people every minute. We know that the risk of an increase in violence depends on a combination of factors, and not on just one factor alone.

It is also clear that the factors that cause armed violence often coincide with the causes of underdevelopment: serious social and economic inequalities, chronic unemployment, inequitable access to resources, uncontrolled urban growth and other forms of marginalization. As a region, Latin America has the highest homicide rates in the world. But Latin America is also the region where society as a whole is involved in preventing and reducing armed violence. Non-governmental organizations, associations, community leaders, governments, and more recently the private sector, have comprehensive experience in the implementation of projects and programs to prevent and reduce violence in affected communities. These

organizations are not only involved in removing the instruments that promote violence (usually guns) from circulation, but they are also dedicated to redefining the reasons and measures that may contribute to violent behavior. Civil society organizations are involved in thousands of effective activities in complex circumstances, and are therefore an important resource that we should tap into and expand.

This publication presents information about projects that were selected to participate in a regional meeting on good practices held in Rio de Janeiro, in order to reverse this serious issue that affects and threatens thousands of people around the world.

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Revista

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All photos in this edition have been released for publication by the participants of this event.

We would like to extend a special thanks to the Government of Switzerland and the Secretariat of the Geneva Declaration.

A Close-up Look at Violence Prevention Programs

Throughout Latin America numerous projects are being successfully implemented to reduce armed violence, but so far there are no studies that provide a detailed picture of violence prevention to know what kind of interventions have been effective and why. Brazil is a hotbed for these kinds of projects in the region; to identify the work that has been done in this country, the Brazilian Forum on Public Security (Foro Brasileiro de Segurança Pública or FBSP) and the United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (Ilanud Brazil) have undertaken the first major step to identify, map, research and classify projects, programs and policies on youth violence prevention and their outcomes.

This endeavor to classify the experiences on youth violence prevention was conducted under the Project Youth and Violence Prevention. In the

first phase, researchers studied the projects and organized the information. Then in the second phase, they compiled an overview of the information to be used in preventing violence among adolescents and youth.

This is an initiative of Brazil's Ministry of Justice, carried out by the FBSP, in partnership with Ilanud and the Instituto Sou da Paz, from São Paulo, and includes two other core programs: a study on the profile of vulnerable youth and/or juvenile offenders, and the organization of workshops and development of specific resources to support

professionals involved in these issues.

According to Marina Menezes, project coordinator for Ilanud Brazil and assistant coordinator for FBSP, the goal of the study is to provide social workers, local

government and various other people and institutions involved in youth violence prevention with useful

information on what works and what doesn't work.

"One of the most important findings from mapping our initiatives in Brazil, is that most programs and projects geared towards youth apply at least one of the following strategies: education, sports, employment, culture and empowerment," explained Menezes.

The systematization process occurred over three specific stages: the identification of current youth violence prevention programs and projects; an in-depth study of 39 of these identified experiences and a consultation with project and program managers and youth involved in these experiences, to compare and complement the study. "Government has started to implement initiatives, but non-governmental organizations still play a leading role in improving the mechanisms for youth work. Among all the projects that we studied, we found only one government project in the area of 'youth empowerment', which is being implemented in partnership with an NGO," emphasized Menezes. The outcome of the research will be useful to those who work to prevent violence throughout the continent.

Country:
Brazil

Organizations:
Brazilian Forum on Public Security and ILANUD Brazil

"Most programs and projects geared towards youth use at least one of these five strategies: education, sports, employment, culture and empowerment."

RELIABLE DATA ON VIOLENCE is Not a Luxury

Most developing countries aren't equipped with epidemiological monitoring systems on violence-related injuries that could provide reliable data for planning violence prevention strategies. The reason for this is usually a lack of resources. However,

several projects implemented by Diego Zavala Zegarra, a doctor in epidemiology from the School of Medicine and Health Sciences (EMCS) in Ponce, Puerto Rico, have proven that reliable data on this

issue is not simply a luxury for rich countries.

One of his projects is a monitoring system for hospital emergency rooms, which has been implemented in Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Bolivia, with support from the Pan American Health Organization.

"Each country selected a city's main hospital where emergency room patients were treated for different injuries, including violence-related injuries. They sent the information via Internet to Puerto Rico where I evaluated it. Over the course of 6 months, I compiled

more than 6,000 cases with detailed information," said Zavala. This was proof that the implementation of an epidemiological monitoring system in a hospital doesn't have to be an economic burden for the facility, as the system can easily be adjusted to the patient recordkeeping system. Currently, doctor Zavala is working on another monitoring system for mortality rates through forensic institutions or morgues, an initiative of the World Health Organization that will be first implemented in Africa.

"All these initiatives can be implemented in Latin America.

In fact, these monitoring systems already exist in some countries in the region, such as Colombia. We recently implemented a similar system in Tarija, in my home country of Bolivia," said Zavala, but he clarified that this requires political will from a country's public health authorities.

Doctor Zavala is currently working in Puerto Rico, one of the countries that will greatly benefit from this kind

of data collection: according to an assessment made by doctor Zavala and his fellow EMCS colleagues, the mortality rate among men between the ages of 20 to 24 is a staggering 134 per 100,000 inhabitants. This study, entitled "The 2000-2007 geographic distribution of homicide rates in Puerto Rico", indicates

Countries:

Puerto Rico, Bolivia, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo

Organization:

School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Ponce and public hospitals



Implementing an epidemiological monitoring system in a hospital is not a huge economic burden.

that the general homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants is 19.8 and the total homicide rate among men per 100,000 inhabitants is 38.5 (of which 33.7 are caused by firearms).

To consolidate this type of information, doctor Zavala believes that it is important for Puerto Rico to implement these systems that have already been successfully implemented in Africa and Bolivia. He hopes to implement this project in one of the main hospitals in Ponce in the first few months of 2011.

A Sharp Focus on Violence Reduction Programming

By **Alonso Tobón Mejía**

Are we developing and implementing appropriate programs to address the issues that are caused by armed violence in Latin America? By evaluating and monitoring these programs we can find an answer to this issue, and propose methodological guidelines.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) proposes the following evaluation tool: the Armed Violence Reduction Lens (AVR). This tool recommends that we look at armed violence as a complex phenomenon that interacts on various levels and is affected by several risk factors. Furthermore, any initiatives on Armed Violence Reduction and Prevention (AVRP) must encompass two key approaches: coordinated actions at different levels and the consideration of four key elements that impact on violence.

AVRP actions should be implemented at the following four levels: global, regional, national and local. These four levels of decision-making and the various actions must be coordinated for any armed violence reduction and prevention policy or program to be effective.

These policies and programs must also cut across all development plans. Furthermore, all interventions must focus on four components that are closely connected to armed violence: the victims of violence, the offenders, the instruments used to commit violence and the institutional environment (both formally and informally).

There are various project evaluation methodologies, and considering the complex, multidimensional nature of the interventions to reduce and prevent armed violence, we recommend using the following two: the Theory of Change and Outcome Mapping.

Often interventions don't achieve the expected results because they are based on unsuccessful or incomplete theories of change.

According to the Theory of Change methodology, developed by the OECD, all interventions in conflict prevention and peace building are based on the issue that people wish to change. Often interventions don't achieve the



expected results because they are based on unsuccessful or incomplete theories of change.

That is why this methodology aims to identify the theories of change that underlie the intervention.

Complementing the previous evaluation methodology, Outcome Mapping is used by the International Development Research Center (IDRC) and concentrates on analyzing the results of the projects, such as changes in behavior, relationships, activities or actions by individuals, groups or organizations that were the target of the intervention.

For the complete text and bibliographical references, see: www.comunidadsegura.org.br/es

Country:
Colombia

Organizations:
Resource Center for Conflict Analysis (CERAC or Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos)

BRAZIL: Its Guns and Their Victims

Armed violence in Brazil is considered an epidemic and firearms are the main carrier of this 'disease', but for a long time the country lacked any information on this topic. To fill this knowledge gap, Viva Rio and the Institute for the Study of Religions (Instituto para O Estudo de Religiões or ISER) undertook the study "Brazil, its guns and their victims".

"Understanding where these firearms are, who owns them and what kind of weapons they have, is crucial for understanding the powerful connection between violence and the availability of firearms. Simply counting the

number of weapons isn't enough," concluded the study.

One of the authors, economist Julio Purcena, explains that the work includes a historic overview of

the small firearms legislation since the 1930s; it analyses the origins of the illegal small firearms market in the country and maps the owners of weapons, pinpointing their exact location and specifying what kind of weapons they possess.

In Brazil, 50% of all weapons are illegal (either criminal or informal)

and approximately 27% of the firearms are informal, which makes them more likely to end up in criminal circuits.

The study found that, like so many other socioeconomic factors, the possession of firearms is extremely heterogeneous in the states and regions across Brazil. The lack of effective registration and control is widespread, but takes on various forms: from the unregistered 38 mm handgun that ends up in the hands of criminals in a favela in São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro, to the unregistered rifle or shotgun on a farm in Mato Grosso or Rio Grande do Sul, or a shotgun used to guard the illegal gold mines in Rondonia.

Based on this study, Viva Rio developed and then implemented specific programs to reduce and prevent armed violence in Rio de Janeiro. These were later also used in places as far away as Haiti. "During this process, Viva Rio acquired unique expertise that combines in-depth knowledge of the contexts affected by poverty and armed violence, field data management and the formulation of



"To understand the violence, we need to know where the guns are, who owns them and what kind of weapons they have."

public policies. From Rio de Janeiro to Bel Air in Haiti, Viva Rio has been working on integrating the three major themes that play a strategic role in reducing urban violence: the integration of vulnerable youth; the reform of the public security sector and community development," concluded Purcena.

Country:
Brazil

Organizations:
Viva Rio, the
Institute for the
Study of Religions
(Iser)

São Paulo Develops Local Action Plan for Gun Control

Twelve years of work experience in gun control has taught the Instituto Sou da Paz that, in addition to legislative changes and international treaties on gun control, local action is an absolute must.

As a result, Sou da Paz is currently implementing a Local Plan for Gun Control, a unique initiative in Brazil that proposes the integration of various sectors in society to control weapons in São Paulo.

“We are in the implementation stages, conducting a detailed assessment, in partnership with the following organs who are responsible for the city’s gun control: the Federal Police, the Civil Police, the Military Police, the Metropolitan Civil Guard, the State Secretary of Public Security, the Municipal Secretary of Urban Security, the State Secretary of Justice and Citizenship, the Ministry of Justice and other

civil society stakeholders,” explained Alice Andrés Ribeiro, coordinator of the project.

The goal of the plan is to reduce the number of gun-related deaths in the city by focusing on two priorities: the implementation of technical gun control measures where needed, as indicated by the assessment and increasing awareness to reduce the demand for and the use of guns. The idea is to develop policies and actions based on a participatory process that involves all the key players.

“Policies will only have a lasting impact if the key players are involved in their development and implementation,” affirmed Ribeiro, adding that simply promoting a monthly dialogue on gun control among the key players has already made a difference.

Country:
Brazil

Organizations:
Instituto Sou da Paz, Federal Police, Civil Police, State Police, Metropolitan Civil Guard, State Secretary of Public Security, Municipal Secretary of Urban Security, State Secretary of Justice and Citizenship, Ministry of Justice

The Power of Young People’s Faith in Building Peace

By Oscar Amat and León Pérez

The Latin American and Caribbean Youth Faith Network for Peace (Red Juvenil Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Religiones por la Paz) is an organization of youth from different religious denominations who in 2010 coordinated the international campaign: “Promoting Gun Control to Prevent Armed Violence and Stimulate Development”. The campaign mobilized interfaith youth to work together to teach, mobilize and advocate gun control and overcome armed violence as a condition for human development in Latin America and the Caribbean. These youth overcame their own religious differences to work together to reduce violence. They have shown that it is possible for Latin American youth to express their faith in a way that underlines global responsibility for managing and governing our common home, the planet Earth. To participate: http://www.armsdown.net/?page_id=400

* Regional Coordination Representative for the Networks of Religions for Peace in Latin America and the Caribbean

Photograph: Erico Hiller



Drums for Peace in Haiti:

A Positive Experience in Conflict Resolution

Like in so many other countries, youth in Haiti are the main group at risk of urban violence; they are the majority of victims and offenders. Often informally organized in rivaling home bases, many youth exercise a significant amount of influence in the poorer neighborhoods of the Haitian capital, in particular in the historic neighborhood of Bel Air, famous for its strong and active street culture.

Countries:
Haiti and Brazil

Organization:
Viva Rio

Brazilian organization Viva Rio is implementing an armed violence reduction project in this neighborhood by promoting peace through community development, interpersonal conflict mediation,

community protection brigades and the reintegration of former child soldiers.

Daniela Berkovitch, coordinator of institutional relations and communications for Viva Rio-Haiti, explains that based on the practices that have been developed in Brazil's favelas (poor, violence-prone neighborhoods), Viva Rio is exporting this socially innovative technology and adapting it to the Haitian reality.

Peace agreements

Bel Air is composed of 14 sections, divided into five rivaling regions,

each one controlled by a gang of youth. These youth gangs are multifaceted; they practice a style of traditional song and dance called "rara", but may also be prone to violent behavior. These gangs are neither exclusively criminal nor exclusively cultural; they are social organisms. Because of this complexity, peace agreements between

the rivaling groups have played a key role in the community security project since the very beginning. To date, four agreements have been signed, each one the result of an emerging need to ratify previous agreements or to resolve new conflicts (caused by unexpected events, such as the influx of escaped criminals into Bel Air after the earthquake in January of 2010).

Today, the project is active in 18 different regions that have a history of violent rivalry. This area encompasses 26 schools and more than 15,000 students who are involved in different levels (water management, solid waste management, reforestation, health care and prevention, arts and sports), ensuring that youth play an active role in creating a culture of peace in the region.

The armed violence reduction project in Bel Air is based on promoting peace through community development.



COMMUNITY CONFLICT RESOLUTION: The Power of Dialogue as a tool for social inclusion



In Arauca, a district in western Colombia, citizens don't need to take their conflicts to the local judiciary powers to obtain a legally binding solution. When two or more people are facing a problem, they can meet with a Justice Mediator in their own community.

The program Community Justice School of the National University of Colombia (Escuela de Justicia Comunitaria de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia or EJCUN) coordinates this mediation to reduce the involvement of armed players in solving community disagreements and to create procedures for including sectors and people who historically have been excluded from the justice process.

Lawyer Carlos Eduardo Ruiz Galindo, academic coordinator for EJCUN, emphasizes that "this is a shortcut to bar armed interference in conflicts by stimulating and strengthening the local identity of the community. Furthermore, it lends legitimacy to any measures and decisions taken here."

The key people in this program are the Justice Mediators, community leaders chosen for this task by the population itself, who have undergone specific training and whose decisions are fully recognized by the state. The resolution of community conflicts is simplified as the mediators are

The Community Justice School builds peace through community conflict resolution, under the guidance of a Justice Mediator. This reduces the likeliness of an armed intervention in the community.

part of the community and conflicts are resolved quickly, efficiently and without any cost. The people involved in the conflict are the ones who decide how to solve it,

without any complicated language or procedures, in an atmosphere of trust.

In Arauca, approximately 150 community leaders have been trained as conflict mediation experts, but the EJCUN is also active in other districts in Colombia, such as in Santander and Cesar, with approximately 2,000 community leaders.

Galindo explains that "the direct beneficiaries of this intervention are the community leaders who with our support are strengthening their position as community authorities in conflict management, contributing to the community's development and autonomy, making it more resistant to armed conflict."

The indirect beneficiaries are the communities as the actions that result from these interventions have a positive impact on people's lives, promoting peaceful and inclusive conflict resolutions and excluding the armed players who may try to get involved in the community. The community also learns to take a critical stand against potentially antidemocratic and discriminatory social norms.

País:
Colombia
Organización:
Escuela de Justicia Comunitaria de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia

“If We Enjoy Life, Why Do We Play With Guns?”

Educating children and re-educating adults on a culture of peace; this sums up the most recent armed violence prevention project that is being undertaken in Guatemala by the Educational Institute for Sustainable Development (Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible or Iepades). In the last 12 years, Iepades has been active in coordinating gun control initiatives through political lobbying and advocating legislative reform.

Supported by UNICEF, Iepades implemented the program “Reducing the childhood impact of armed violence», which offers Guatemalan children and youth who have been exposed to crime, alternatives to criminal involvement.

In a country where 18 to 20 people are killed by guns every day -85% of which are young people-, and where the involvement of youth in gangs has a serious

impact on economic growth, there is an urgent need to sever the ties between childhood and violence, the main cause of school drop-out.

Executive director of Iepades and a sociologist specializing in development, Carmen Rosa de León-Escribano explains that the project operates in educational centers in the vulnerable districts of Guatemala.



“We negotiated with the directors of the educational centers to integrate them into this process through the participation of their administrative and teaching staff, parents and students.”

The centers use a ‘trickle down’ multiplier methodology, training young people to become peace multipliers who then will share their knowledge through talks, cultural and sports activities, peace marches, playful events, video-forums, art contests and fairs. In partnership with the Ministry of Education and the National Civil Police, the program so far has had a direct impact on 30,000 children nationwide. But adults, and in particular journalists, also need to be re-educated and transformed into multipliers of this peace culture.

“We realized that to change the law and support the legal

transformations that we have been advocating, we first needed to change society’s mentality and we saw that using mass media to raise the awareness of the Guatemalan people had a positive impact,” explained León-Escribano. For this purpose, the organization developed a manual for journalists and social communicators on how to address the news of young victims of armed violence and presented this content through a series of regional workshops. The main outcome of the manual and the awareness raising process in which journalists and social communicators participated was the creation of the following campaign slogan: “If we like to live, why do we play with guns?”

This statement touches not only children but also the adults, who are the ones that transmit values and serve as role models.

Country:
Guatemala

Organizations:
Educational Institute for Sustainable Development (Iepades), UNICEF, Ministry of Education, National Police

REAL MEN Don't Need Violence

Approximately 8,000 Nicaraguan youth have benefited from the programs of the Violence Prevention Center (Centro de Prevención de la Violencia or CEPREV), which offers workshops on peace culture to youth gangs and residents of violent communities in Nicaragua. As a result, at least 80% of the youth gangs in the participating communities have broken up.

"Our main goal is to help these youth break with this self-destructive

and violent behavior by creating a culture of peace," explained psychologist Iveth del Socorro Espino Altamirano, a member of

Ceprev. She stated that the main focus of the workshops and personal talks is to promote the idea that being a man can be expressed through constructive, peaceful behavior, unlike the models of violence offered by gangs. The

project offers participatory and experiential workshops, as well as individual psychological counseling to the members of the main target

"At a personal level I am well; my self-esteem has increased. As far as my family goes, I am also doing well. The way I think and act has changed because of the psychologist's help. My neighborhood has also changed a lot," testifies a young participant.

group. 80% of the participants have been reintegrated in the community and joined a variety of economic, cultural, educational, recreational or community leadership activities.

This project has been implemented in 34 of Managua's most violent communities, marked by poverty, social exclusion, stigmatization, unemployment, a lack of opportunities and a growing trade in drugs and weapons. This project also trains educators, journalists, government staff and non-governmental organizations involved in social work on a violence prevention model. "In the last 8 years I have been working directly in the capital's most violent communities. During this period I have observed how youth involved in

gangs first used weapons such as knives and machetes, but now they have firearms such as revolvers, automatic weapons and pistols. This has only generated more violence and the trade in illegal weapons and drugs has only further entrenched them in this problem," warned Altamirano, adding that part of the success of the Ceprev model is thanks to the trust that is created between the youth and the team members, as the result of the ongoing work in the neighborhoods.

Country:
Nicaragua
Organization:
Violence
Prevention
Center (Ceprev)



Art As a Weapon Against War in Medellín

On the soccer field, at the bus stop, in the store. Young people from Comuna 13 in Medellín encounter violence on a regular basis, either as a victim or as a lifestyle choice. But now they are increasingly finding a different way of relating to their neighborhood: in a peaceful and artistic way.

Country:
Colombia

Organization:
Corporación Paz
y Democracia

Together with cultural group Son Batá, Corporación Paz y Democracia

shows children and youth in this part of Medellín how to use art as an alternative to war.

In these communities, where armed groups are always recruiting young people, taking the side of a criminal gang is almost an obligatory survival strategy. But

now the art of Son Batá offers them a third alternative. "By choosing art over war we have learned that artistic expressions, such as dance, music, theatre, crafts and audiovisual media can motivate children and youth to not get involved in war and allow them to be recognized in their communities as artists and cultural leaders," explained Iván Darío Ramírez, coordinator of the Program Childhood, Armed Conflict and Organized Armed Violence of Corporación Paz y Democracia.

Ramírez added that through its work experience the organization has learned that there is a big difference between confrontational

policies and structural, long-term policies, which are the responsibility of the state and public policies, and the important role played by civil society and its organizations.

Violence prevention projects based on art have to pursue high quality and self-sufficiency in order to survive.

"With our experience we have proven that civil society has the capacity to promote and implement projects with tangible outcomes, based on a peaceful concept of resisting violence by promoting sociocultural,

educational and sports activities. We base our work on three elements," noted Ramírez. Despite the successful results so far, the work still faces serious challenges. The most serious challenge to date has been the recent murder of Andrés Felipe Medina, a local group coordinator. Other crimes against young artists have occurred in Comuna 13, but instead of terrifying the population it has only strengthened support for the young artists.

"We are determined to strengthen the group artistically and institutionally, preserving their identity and bond with the neighborhood," said Ramírez, adding that to succeed they require the commitment of government and the private sector to support and manage the projects and to become self-sufficient as an organization.



Prevention, A BASIC SCHOOL SUBJECT

When in 2005 the University Institute for Democracy, Peace and Security (Instituto Universitario en Democracia Paz y Seguridad or IUDPAS) in Honduras developed its violence prevention project, it became clear that youth were the main victims of violence and 78% of all violent deaths in the country were caused by firearms in neighborhoods with a high incidence of violence and gangs.

Something had to be done immediately and IUDPAS implemented the Violence Prevention Program in Educational Centers, supported by the UN Program for Development, the Swedish Agency for International Development and the National Autonomous University of Honduras, in collaboration with the Secretary of Education. The program's main activities were developed in Tegucigalpa, where the key pilot project was implemented at the Luis Bográn Technical Institute, a government institution on the outskirts of the capital of Honduras, with a high incidence of violence.

"The program trained teachers and students from 35 educational centers around the pilot project area, as well as directors, teachers, general staff members, parents and students between the ages of 10 to 18. So far, a total of 19,272 youth

and adults have been trained as violence prevention agents," informed Migdonia Nohemy Ayestas, coordinator of the project. The results have generated new international funds to set up three new pilot projects and the Secretary of Education of Honduras has now committed to the project. Ayestas explained that national and international support for the project is the result of the tangible outcomes that were achieved by training children, teachers and parents on the issue of violence. "The children who participated in the training know about different forms of abuse and the tools to protect them. They

have also become more involved in the development of their communities, improved their self-esteem and interpersonal relationships, learned how to use conflict resolution mechanisms,

reinforced their sense of belonging to the community and multiplied the knowledge that they have gained," added the psychologist.

The Secretary of Education of Honduras has taken responsibility for the model and allocated government resources to implement the project.



The teachers who took part in the training are now better aware and more respectful of their students' rights, which has increased their participation in the classroom. "The teachers listen, counsel and develop relationships with the families, creating a bond and room for dialogue, trust, respect and tolerance within the educational community."

Finally, parents have also improved their relationships with teachers and directors by participating more actively in school and in the community, and developing positive ways to discipline and treat their children.

They also share their experiences with other families and, like the other beneficiaries, are multiplying the impact of their learning.

Country:
Honduras
Organization:
University Institute for Democracy, Peace and Security (IUDPAS)

Reaching Out To The Local Labor Market

Luta pela Paz (Fight for Peace or LPP) is one of Brazil's best known organizations for their work with youth at risk of getting involved in violence or who have already become involved in violence. Most people know LPP because of their physical activities (boxing, capoeira and wrestling), through which young people become involved in constructive activities, learn to practice competitive sports and become integrated into their neighborhood.

Country:
Brazil
Organization:
Luta pela Paz

But LPP has also been training young people and helping them access the labor market. Serving youth from the community of Nova Holanda, in the northern part of Rio de Janeiro, LPP mainly focuses on the most vulnerable youth: those who are not enrolled in school

or unemployed and therefore an easy recruitment target for criminal gangs.

One of their most recent programs is called "New Paths" and the goal is to train youth in a skill or trade that will help them find a job. "The lesson we have learned with the New Path project is that there must be a support structure to keep these youth in the project and be successful. It is essential to offer tutoring (some youth are still afraid of the classroom) and to provide a childcare room where young moms can leave their children while they study," explained Juliana Tibau Moreira, LPP project manager.

The program includes an active community participation component. The planning was carried out together with local youth who, in observing other youth, realized that



they weren't benefiting from public policies and decided to take a stand. The residents of Nova Holanda are also involved in the implementation of this project.

The first step is to approach youth at risk. The outreach is done by community residents on the streets of the favela, inviting youth to participate in the program. This is followed by a formal education component (elementary and high school) and professional skills training. Finally the youth are ready to look for work. Parallel to this, the youth benefit from support services, such as English lessons and computer training, as well as social, psychological and legal assistance.



Working Shoulder to Shoulder With Young People

Using sports to capture the attention of youth, Instituto Reação has been working since 2003 to provide opportunities for children and youth who live in violent and underprivileged areas in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. The institute works with youth in these communities on a daily basis, through the Reação Schools for sports, culture, education and human development.

"We help to promote resilience, investing in social integration programs that reduce the involvement of children and youth in urban violence, especially in armed violence that is part of the groups that reside in these communities," said Lariana Del Giudice Figueiredo, executive coordinator of Instituto Reação.

Founded by Olympic judo champion Flavio Canto, Instituto

Reação is based on the idea of using sports to attract youth and stimulate them to develop social, cognitive, productive and personal skills. An Olympic sport, judo offers strong educational components based on discipline, respect for others and non-violence. It also increases self-esteem and determination. Cidade de Deus, Pequena Cruzada, Rocinha and Tubicanga, where the Institute runs its programs. Although the most talented participants may excel in sports, that is by no means the main goal of the project; its focus is to offer alternatives to violence, strengthen self-esteem, develop social skills and prepare youth for the labor market. ■

País:
Brasil

Organización:
Instituto Reacción



Urban Cultures Working for Peace

By Yuri de Moraes

I am a Hip Hop activist and have created a network in Brazil to promote human rights and citizenship. I have proven the importance of mobilizing and involving youth through urban culture such as Hip Hop. Hip Hop plays a key role in facilitating a dialogue with and among vulnerable groups, by sharing information and promoting participation, creating opportunities for preserving and transforming the communities in which they live. Hip Hop is a great alternative for youth from excluded areas, offering them a strong voice in a society that doesn't know how to listen and that simply wants to impose its world views. The most important form of mass communication for the excluded masses in Brazil, Hip Hop expresses itself through music, graffiti, newspapers and community radio shows that try to show a different country and the essence of the society in which they live. ■



The Police Stations Of El Agustino: A Warm Welcome for Youth

Imagine a police station for youth that instead of dark and dirty cells offers meditation rooms, and where instead of fear and isolation, a teen in conflict with the law encounters a respectful dialogue. Utopia? No, it really exists. This place is located in El Agustino, a district with 185,000 people, of which 60% live in extreme poverty, and the highest juvenile delinquency rates in Lima. This is where the project Restorative Justice for Youth (Justicia Juvenil Restaurativa or JJR) operates, founded in 2005

by Terre des Hommes, Encuentros, the Casa de la Juventud Lima and El Agustino Police Department. This project managed to achieve in five years what regular justice was unable to

accomplish in decades: reducing the recidivism rates in El Agustino's police departments from 55% to 3%.

Model Unit

According to the El Agustino chief of police, officer Daniel Llaury Linares, the core of the work with youth in conflict with the law - and the greatest source of pride for the El Agustino Police Department - is the First Specialized Youth Unit in Police Stations, the first of its kind in all of Latin America. This unit has a room with basic services where youth in custody can rest; a room where the staff work, equipped with a line-up window where the victim and witnesses can recognize the teen without having any direct contact and a patio where youth can meet with their family members.

The need for changes in the juvenile justice system was supported by a study conducted in 2002 by Terre des Hommes, which identified that the police, the judicial system

and the Public Prosecutor offered no specialized youth services whatsoever.

The implementation of the Specialized Unit has resulted in an integrated circuit with centralized procedures for youth detained in any of the five police stations in El Agustino.

Since the implementation of the Unit, most police cases have ensured the presence of the youth's parents and police reports have been handed over to the public

prosecutors much faster. Under the project 100% of all teens have been treated with dignity, as testified by the youth themselves. The entire process has improved the perception and participation of both

the victim and the community, and created a meeting place (for victims) and social platform for the communities and the youth. ■

Lima implements its first Specialized Youth Unit in Police Stations in Latin America

Country:
Peru

Organizations:
El Agustino Police Department, Foundation Terre des Hommes, Asociación Encuentros, Casa de la Juventud Lima

The Police and the Community of Neuquén, WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT VIOLENCE

In the Argentinean region of Patagonia, the Police of Neuquén Province has expanded its professional scope beyond the typical police task of repressing crime. The police department now plays an active role in crime prevention. Head of the Neuquén police department, sub-commissioner Rubens Fabián Rebuffo has been a key player in this process; he is convinced that the police and community working closely together produces excellent results. Rebuffo has a degree in Security Systems, specializes in Investigative Methodology and is an expert in Conflict Resolution and Human Rights.

How can the police contribute to violence prevention and promote development?

The police has the opportunity of doing something that transcends itself, for example helping someone on a routine police patrol or contributing to the professional growth of the institution. Personally I have had the opportunity to work on many projects like this, such as the Latin American Network of Police and Civil Society, of which I am a founding member. As I am in charge of some of the police training courses, I am also a multiplier of new knowledge. Not all police officers have these opportunities and tend to focus more on repression.

What has influenced you to expand your vision?

The opportunity to work and interact with some NGO's and community organizations has helped me to develop a broader view of violence prevention. I realized that we can use other tools, to replace or complement the specific police tasks.

What is the Neuquén police department doing in this area at the moment?

We are implementing a Functional Restructuring Program to offer the population of the capital of Neuquén better services, an increased police presence on the streets and greater prevention of violent situations. The idea is to reduce these incidences and when they do occur, identify and prosecute the offenders, avoiding future incidences.

How have you been monitoring and evaluating the results?

By compiling crime statistics, unit by unit, day by day, using software connected to a Geographic Information System. The program is still in the evaluation stages, as it only became operational at the beginning of 2009. We are still collecting data and making adjustments to the 26 police units.



What has been achieved so far and what lessons have you learned from the restructuring project?

Some incidences of crime are already going down. We have learned a lot of things, for example: we can obtain good results by becoming more involved with the community, by working together with other organizations and by increasing the role of non-governmental organizations and other social stakeholders, who play a key role in institutional development.

Country:
Argentina
Organization:
Neuquén
Province Police
Department

What has been your role in the project?

I participated in designing the project and then in the Operational Restructuring of the Police Operations Center. Later I acted as service supervisor in a Prevention Patrol Unit, or rather, as the end user of the project. This has been one of the most important roles, as it is in the field that we encounter the most positive and negative aspects of the project.

Assessment Indicates Urgent Need

Social Inclusion Project in Itabuna, Bahía



According to the Brazilian Ministry of Justice, the municipality of Itabuna, located in the northeastern state of Bahia, leads the list of municipalities in Brazil with the highest number of violence-related youth mortality: 80% of these deaths are caused by firearms.

Country:
Brazil

Organizations:
Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, the Civil Police Force, Instituto Votorantim

To address this critical situation, the Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, supported by the Votorantim Institute, implemented the program "Assessment of the Reality of Children and Adolescents" and the ensuing "2010-2011 Action Plan for vulnerable youth".

The assessment concluded that there are three major areas in Itabuna, dominated by groups of delinquents, where the highest

incidence of violent deaths occurs.

One of the leaders of the project is civil police officer Roberto José da Silva, police notary and geographer with experience in urban planning and public geography. An investigator for the Council of the

Rights of Children and Adolescents, Da Silva explains that these areas in Itabuna have the following in common: social exclusion, extreme poverty and a lack of educational and employment opportunities.

"The assessment allowed us to determine that the murder rate in Itabuna -84 per 100.000 inhabitants- is directly linked to the illegal drug trade in which the criminal gangs are involved. These gangs derive their income from the drug trade and fight over control of the three previously mentioned areas," explains the expert.

Solution: Social inclusion

Based on this understanding of the problem, the next step was to develop an action plan to offer opportunities to prevent youth in Itabuna from getting involved in

these gangs. The idea is to include and organize various sectors of society, starting with the municipal institutions and certain areas of state government, but also to involve the private sector, community organizations, parents and other family.

According to Da Silva, the essence of the plan is to "promote inclusion -through education, healthcare and leisure - as a way to a better life and being a full citizen. This can be achieved by creating cultural, educational and sports programs for children and adolescents on weekends and during holidays and vacation periods, to keep them from being recruited by criminal gangs in their spare time.

This has resulted in the implementation of the Ministry of Education's Open Schools program that enables schools to operate on weekends and offer sports, education, cultural and leisure activities.

To further occupy youth in their spare time, the Plan also calls for more schools in at-risk areas, expanded healthcare services, more job opportunities for youth, treatment for underage drug addicts and the establishment of a Special Police Task Force to Prevent Crimes Against Children and Youth. ■

Estación Esperanza: Saying Goodbye To Crime

The project Estación Esperanza, in the municipality of Estación Central on the outskirts of Santiago de Chile, was created to interrupt the budding criminal careers of youth under the age of 14, in an area of the Chilean capital that is subject to high incidences of youth crime and domestic violence.

Estación Central has 130,000 residents, and before this project the only response to children in conflict with the law was suspension from school and conventional punishment.

The founders of the Estación Esperanza project learned that this approach only further marginalized the youth, often pushing them into a life of crime. Estación Esperanza takes advantage of the strengths of individual youths and their families, as well as identifying their weaknesses. The unique feature of this project is that it treats each case on an individual basis and is very well accepted by the community. "The goal is to work very closely with those youth who have broken the law and/or whose rights have been violated and as a result have become involved in some kind of police procedure," explained psychologist Felipe Andrés

Al momento de entrar en contacto con los niños y niñas, los técnicos se encuentran con conflictos familiares de violencia y vulneración, cuestión que hace necesaria una intervención integral con toda la familia.

Fernández Soto, department head of Public Security for the municipality of Estación Central.

Soto confirms that the project's participants have a low level of recidivism: approximately 17%.

Direct contact

Soto believes that the project's biggest challenge is the low retention rate of those who join the program. "These youth have often gone through several unsuccessful interventions, ranging from the educational system to mental health. To address the problem and build a relationship of trust with the team, we start with a comprehensive series of home visits during which we talk to the young person and establish some commitments," explained the psychologist.

According to a study to evaluate the level of acceptance of the project among its users, 60% of minors that were interviewed said that they felt supported when the "aunts or uncles" - as they refer to the psychologists and social workers -



visited their homes.

In addition to individual assistance, the program offers group activities for the youth and strengthens the family's skills.

First the youth is referred to the project by the police and undergoes an assessment to determine the level of vulnerability. This is followed by an intervention, which is planned according to the specific needs of each case. Finally, there is the follow-up process and closure. When the user doesn't respond, legal counsel is offered. When the staff contact the youth they often encounter family conflicts that involve violence and vulnerability, demanding a holistic intervention that involves the entire family.

Country:
Chile

Organizations:
The Municipality of Estación Central, Carabineros de Chile and the Ministry of the Interior

From Coercion to Cohesion

Mexico is currently experiencing a public security crisis that has hit a number of cities particularly hard: for example, between 2007 and 2009, the homicide rate increased by 22%.

This data from the National System of Public Security reinforces the need for a broad violence prevention and reduction policy and that is exactly the main task of the National Network of Municipalities

for Security and Citizenship (Red Nacional de Municipios por la Seguridad y la Convivencia Ciudadana), recently created by the National Center for Crime Prevention and Citizenship Participation (Centro Nacional de

Prevención del Delito y Participación Ciudadana or CNPDPC).

According to Laura Carrera Lugo, a doctor in sociolinguistics and member of the CNPDPC, the Network offers tools for governments and civil society to work together on public security issues and aims to establish itself as platform for developing a holistic, multisector strategy for preventing violence and promoting active citizenship.

"Setting up the network is

the beginning of an important movement of municipal governments in Mexico in an effort to increase their commitment to the security of its citizens," explained Lugo.

The network began with a series of regional meetings with the mayors of León, in Guanajuato; Tuxtla Gutiérrez, in Chiapas; San Luis Potosí, in the homonymous province; Cuernavaca, in Morelos; and Hermosillo, in Sonora. After a number of discussions, the network was founded at a national level and began to create opportunities for dialogue and promote discussions to identify and understand initiatives, practices and national and international policies that could be implemented in Mexican municipalities.

According to Lugo, the importance of this work is that it acknowledges the specific characteristics of each region as the violence that affects Mexico is by no means homogeneous across the country. "We talk about violence, but in fact there are various kinds and not only the one associated with

organized crime. By distinguishing the different types of violence, we will know what kind of strategy to use, depending on whether we are dealing with gender or domestic violence, violence among neighbors or children, etc," noted the director.

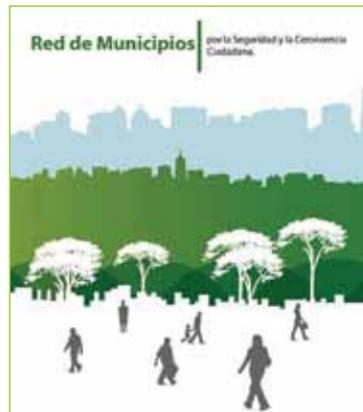
She also underlined that youth are a priority for the network, as the violence and lack of security hinder their development, their capacity to learn and their constructive participation in society. "Youth are the main perpetrators of common crimes and at-risk behavior, but they are also its main victims," she stated. Although still in a process of consolidation, the Network of Municipalities for Security and Citizenship could be a great platform for enabling joint

Government-Community responsibility in terms of security and prevention. "The Network could be very successful at this pivotal moment for Mexico in terms of security, violence and crime. It is still in the starting phase,

but there is a great deal of interest in strengthening the initiative, particularly from local stakeholders, to convert the network into a platform for creating a comprehensive, multisectoral strategy to prevent violence, promote active citizenship and create safe cities."

Country:
Mexico

Organization:
National Center
for Crime
Prevention and
Citizenship
Participation
(Centro Nacional
de Prevención
del Delito y
Participación
Ciudadana)



Peace begins locally

Founded in 1988, after Costa-Rican president Oscar Arias Sánchez was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Development (La Fundación Arias para la Paz y el Progreso Humano) has been promoting a culture of peace in Latin America. In addition to playing an active role in preventing the illegal weapons trade, the Foundation is also known for its program Safe School – Safe Community (Escuela Segura-Comunidad Segura), which offers an effective methodology for preventing youth violence in several countries across the continent. Ana Yanci Espinoza Quirós, coordinator of the Foundation’s Peace and Human Security department, explains that the biggest lesson learned from assisting municipalities in the implementation of the projects, is that for the prevention and reduction of violence to be long-term and effective, municipalities must truly embrace the project and take ownership.

“Violence prevention work should be seen as a complementary platform that by definition takes a holistic, participatory, multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach,” explained Quirós.

The Foundation encourages the participation of different community stakeholders, because a one-dimensional approach significantly

reduces the scope of the impact. “We work with local government, but also involve the educational communities, because they play an important role in prevention.

We also seek the involvement of stakeholders at a state level, who can provide leadership on certain issues and have the capacity to address certain problems,” said Quirós.

The main actions of the Arias Foundation have focused on participatory income generation and actions with a municipal focus to encourage the municipality to play a coordinating role. “We also carry out specific activities in educational centers located on the outskirts of the municipality. Once the assessment and project proposal have been completed, we organize a workshop with municipal and government organization representatives to meet with the community and identify possible preventative actions that can be supported,” explained Quirós.

Both for the planning, as well as the development and implementation of the projects, it is key that the municipality involves



its citizens, to prevent a biased and exclusive approach. “We have learned in Costa Rica that municipalities must recognize and accept that security and prevention are part of their agenda,” added Quirós. To promote local government ownership of projects that have been developed at a national level, Quirós recommends promoting awareness, although that may not be enough. “A much broader scope is required. If we truly want to change the way things are done, these issues should be part of government policies and not just another project or activity. To promote the involvement of local government we have signed cooperation agreements and invited local city council members to participate in activities in their own communities.”

Country:
Costa Rica
Organization:
The Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Development (Fundación Arias para la Paz y el Progreso Humano)

Monitoring and Evaluation: The Keys to Success



Information is power; power to plan good violence prevention interventions; power to demonstrate the effectiveness of a certain project and obtain financing, and power to mobilize public opinion on behalf of a cause.

This has been the experience of Maria Emperatriz Crespín in her capacity as a doctor specializing in public health, a member of the International Physicians for the prevention of Nuclear War -El Salvador chapter- and a member of the Latin America Public Health Network for the Prevention of Violence. Crespín studies the risk factors for victims, offenders and communities, as well as the factors that will protect people from violence. She also advises

on the implementation of projects that address violence and development from a public health perspective. Based on her experience,

she offers a series of key recommendations for developing

and implementing projects on armed violence and development.

Before

“The project should propose a hypothesis to change a specific situation and define exactly what will change with our intervention. This requires a description of the ‘before situation’ and a projection of what the situation will be like afterwards,” she said. This assessment needs to take into consideration the social and historic context to provide a realistic calculation of the time and resources required to generate the desired change.

During

There is no need to wait for the project to finish. In fact, it is advisable to monitor the actions and procedures throughout the intervention. “Monitoring is carried out internally and is a follow-up to what

we are doing and achieving,” says Crespín.

Afterwards

It is absolutely key to measure the impact of each project and compare the results with the expectations, evaluate the successful and unsuccessful actions and provide a general report of the results and the use of resources. The evaluation, which is different from monitoring, is conducted by people outside of the project. Crespín recommends making realistic considerations. “We cannot measure the profound impact of projects in one or two years, because that is how long an implementation phase usually takes.”

Finally, the expert recommends using the monitoring information and evaluations to plan future interventions, secure funding, create awareness and obtain community support.



Country:
El Salvador

Organization:
International
Physicians for
the Prevention of
Nuclear War

Community of Practices on Armed Violence and Development (AV&D) in Latin America

8th and 9th of November 2010, Rio de Janeiro

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