COMMUNICATING TO BUILD TRUST

A Best Practices Guide for Law Enforcement Specialists in Latin America and the Caribbean

A Joint Project of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Center on Media, Crime and Justice (CMCJ), John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY

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Lessons Learned

This booklet reflects and builds upon a three-day workshop, held Nov. 16-18, 2015, at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Washington, D.C. The workshop, entitled "Communicating Crime & Prevention: A workshop for policing & media communicators of Latin America & the Caribbean" was co-ordinated by the Center on Media, Crime and Justice, of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City [1]. Participants and speakers included law enforcement specialists, scholars and journalists from the U.S., Colombia, Spain and Switzerland; and 26 representatives of Latin American and Caribbean justice agencies from the Bahamas, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay. Additional representatives included IDB staff and guest speakers from Colombia, Spain, Switzerland and the United States. Following the conference, additional in-depth interviews with experts and case studies were used to expand the scope of the booklet.

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1 The organizers would like to appreciate the support of all the speakers, administrative staff, secretariat staff and organizers of both the IDB and the CUNY.

Foreword

By Nathalie Alvarado
Principal Specialist, Citizen, Security and Justice Program (IDB)

Over the years, I have developed many citizen security programs. Crime and violence take a heavy toll on Latin America and the Caribbean; getting these programs right is therefore critical. I have seen projects that worked well and others that struggled to make an impact. Many of our citizen security projects involve police forces implementing reforms that bring them closer to their communities, reforms that help base their policing more on hard data, and using techniques that have been rigorously evaluated. I believe a quiet citizen security revolution is underway, one that will make Latin America and the Caribbean a much safer and less murderous region in the coming years.

But when it comes to communicating about crime, justice and prevention, I see a lot of frustration. The broader public believes—often with good reasons—that crime is out of control. Police and security officials struggle to communicate relevant information. Journalists are often accused of unnecessarily fueling fears of crime, of focusing too much on the anecdotal and the spectacular, and of being unwilling to provide broader context. Many journalists I know actually *want* to report more on crime prevention, but they feel they are getting filtered information, that authorities are keen to report the good, while sweeping under the rug information that puts them in a bad light.

At the IDB we are well aware that the politics surrounding crime and violence are difficult. But we are confident that citizens can get a better understanding of what it takes to reduce crime. This will help bring about more support for the kinds of measures we know prevent violence. To that end, this guidebook seeks to provide communicators with the practical tools and recommendations to do a better job, particularly in their dealings with reporters on issues that range from violence against women to reporting on crime statistics. The aim is to help build trust among all actors involved. Having the police communicate in a more professional way with the media—and its broader audiences through social media—is helpful not only to the police but to journalists, who can then report relevant news more accurately and fairly.

I wish to thank the author, Joe Domanick, and Stephen Handelman and his team at the Center on Media, Crime and Justice at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, for putting together this guidebook and a first-rate workshop that provided many valuable inputs. I also wish to thank the team at the IDB that worked on this project: Jorge Srur, Pablo Bachelet, Norma Peña, Mauricio Bastien, and Paul Constance. Effective communication is key to preventing crime, and I'm confident this guidebook is a big step in the right direction.

Introduction

Can the Media Be Your Ally?

Security is an increasing concern across Latin America. High rates of crime now affect every area of development in a region undergoing rapid social change and democratization. And for large numbers of people at all levels of the region's economy, the lack of confidence in the ability of government authorities—and law enforcement in particular—to protect them and keep their families safe has contributed to a sense of instability.

The region's media can exacerbate feelings of insecurity—usually through "sensationalist" coverage. But it can also be an instrument for restoring public confidence and addressing anxieties. The purpose of this booklet is to show how such confidence can be achieved, and sustained, by communications specialists and Public Information Officers (PIOs).

Looking at the press as an ally—or partner—is a first step. That's not easy: The lines between ongoing crime investigations and what can be released to the public are very clear. But many law enforcement jurisdictions around the world have begun to see greater transparency and community accountability by sharing more information as important tools for their public safety mission.

Some of the most innovative new communications approaches reflect the dramatic changes in the media landscape. Traditional print and broadcast media no longer have a monopoly on information. New channels of communication (such as social media, citizen blogging and cellphone video) deliver crime news 24/7 in ways that have complicated the efforts of law enforcement to tell their stories fairly and accurately—and added new tensions.

Recent developments in the U.S. are the most striking examples of these tensions. Millions of Americans for the first time received an unfiltered (but sometimes distorted view) of law enforcement activities through blogging and "viral" videos—at the same time as police organizations have faced criticism of how they operate in vulnerable, urban and racially diverse communities. The latest wave of criticism erupted in the summer of 2014, when a black, unarmed 18-year-old named Michael Brown was fatally shot by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri—and has continued through a succes-

sion of similar tragic incidents around the country. In 2015, President Barack Obama appointed a **Task Force on 21st Century Policing**[2] to steer the debate in productive directions, and senior police managers themselves became increasingly conscious of the need for reforms, in the face of widespread calls for greater oversight and accountability.

The U.S. debate has stimulated a great deal of new thinking about improving police-community communications—and at the same time it has reinforced efforts among many police departments to strengthen crisis management and adapt to the "Internet" world. Similar efforts are underway in police departments around the Americas.

Although this booklet does not assume that those innovations are automatically exportable elsewhere in the region, they underline one obvious conclusion: in an era when citizens have become "empowered" by their laptops and cellphone cameras, a **smart communications strategy** has become essential for successful policing in a democracy.

Of course, the realities of policing change from one country to the other. In some Latin American countries like Chile and Ecuador, law enforcement is handled by centralized, federal police forces. In others, state and municipal law enforcement agencies will do the bulk of the policing. In other countries such as Brazil and Mexico, federal and local police authorities overlap. The differences are understandable. Latin America and the Caribbean have complex societies with different histories and forms of government. Nevertheless, much of what is recommended in this guidebook can work for all police forces.

Internet and cellphone use in Latin America and the Caribbean has grown at a pace faster than many other regions in the world---including the U.S. In 2014, over 395 million individuals in the region owned at least one mobile

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2   The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing,
http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf

phone and used it at least once a month. By 2018, **more than two-thirds of Latin Americans will be connected with the Internet through 'smartphones'[3]**.

This trend has powerful implications for the relationship between police agencies and the public across the hemisphere—and anyone involved in official communications ignores it at his or her peril. What this means for police communications managers and senior executives should be understood in the context of an emerging new theory of social-media communications called "disintermediation."

The theory is based on a realization that public organizations, foundations and corporations can shape and tell their *own* stories *directly* to the public by building cadres of communication specialists, subject experts, and even in-house reporters – thereby eliminating the traditional news media, which the theory regards as unnecessary "middlemen," "intermediaries" and "information gatekeepers."

The concept has some merit. It encourages organizations to build their own smart websites and engage social media audiences, in order to better disseminate their message and to develop the power to tell their own stories.

Nevertheless, it would be a serious mistake for police agencies and their Public Information Officers (PIOs) to ignore the traditional press, broadcast and web-based news media. Even in an innovative, ever- transforming social-media universe, in which the "old" news media has lost its monopoly and much of its audience, traditional channels of communication remain essential players.

Why? For one thing, those traditional forms of communication (print, broadcast, online) are essential for a democracy to thrive. They produce the investigative stories and daily, fact-based reporting that holds powerful government institutions accountable, and that informs and shapes public opinion.

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3   Nearly 400 million in Latin America used mobile phones in 2014,
http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Nearly-400-Million-Latin-America-Used-Mobile-Phones-2014/1011818

It is important for PIOs to acknowledge and accommodate this "watchdog" role—even though it may make them (and their superiors) uncomfortable. Skillful police managers in the U.S., like New York Police Department Commissioner Bill Bratton, have learned how to turn sometimes embarrassing evidence of their agency's shortcomings into messages of positive change. This is a learned skill worth emulating by justice and police agencies of all sizes and in all situations.

In this booklet, therefore, you will find useful guidelines for exploiting the potential of both new and 'old' media to tell your stories, to manage crises when they occur and—most important of all—to establish a sustainable, working partnership with the media that can build credibility and trust with the communities you serve (Part One). These guidelines also explore how agencies can develop best-practices communications strategies for some of the most sensitive areas affecting modern law enforcement in Latin America, such as addressing violence against women (Part Two).

In Part Three, this guide explores the strategy known as community policing and its potential application for building relationships with indigenous and minority communities, students, immigrants and other vulnerable populations.

Finally, it's essential to note that these and other guidebook strategies are also crucial to communicating sustained, long-term crime *prevention* initiatives to the community. Having a more positive, constructive relationship with the press builds the kind of trust police agencies need if they want the media to start covering their reform initiatives fairly. A defensive, reactive relationship guarantees that the press will only emphasize the bad news.

Both the guidelines for the media, and those for the community, therefore, should be considered vital building-blocks in developing successful relationships with these constituencies.

For more detailed information and further reading, this report also includes a list of references and additional resources.

Part One

Developing Long-Term Trust and Productive Relations with the News Media

Understanding reporters should be easy for anyone connected with law enforcement. A good journalist uses the same skill-set as a good detective: ferreting out the facts from a variety of often conflicting sources, making judgments about the veracity of those sources, and pursuing 'gaps' in information.

Nevertheless, tension has long existed between reporters and the police.

Police investigations need secrecy and operational flexibility to be successful, but these characteristics also create a resistance to oversight and barely concealed hostility to criticism. In the U.S., such attitudes have been described in the phrase, "Blue Wall of Silence."

Many police officials believe that the press (and by implication, the public) will never understand the work they do, and the dangers they face. Unfortunately, their hostility breeds a similar disrespect on the part of the media as well. The cycle is inevitable: complaints that a 'biased' media 'gets the story wrong' or 'sensationalizes' it are followed by policies of reducing or sharply limiting communications with the media.

Treating the press as a hostile force is almost always counterproductive in the long run. For one, it limits an organization's voice and influence in news media accounts of a police-involved story. And second, as **John Miller**, who has served as a spokesman for both New York Police Department (NYPD) and the FBI (and is now deputy NYPD Commissioner for Intelligence) told the IDB workshop in November 2015, law enforcement needs to be pro-active, rather than reactive, when its credibility is under attack.

"Get your good news out, but get bad news out faster," he advised. "Unlike bad wine, [bad news] doesn't improve with age."

When hundreds of millions of people are walking around with iPhone cameras always at the ready, and citizen journalists' stories of real and alleged police malfeasance are constantly being posted on the internet, news is no longer what the police or even traditional media say it is.

Attempting to conceal parts of a story (unless they are critical to an ongoing investigation) will inevitably backfire.

"In today's media," NYPD Commissioner **William Bratton** has said. "There are no secrets." But the work of communications specialists and journalists really *begins* when a story (or a version of it) is "out" in social media. Good reporting helps put a story in context, and good police communications helps provide that context. In that sense, law enforcement and journalists are partners—and smart communications strategies will recognize that.

Frank Straub, former chief of police in Spokane, Washington, underlined this point in his remarks to the workshop. "The media is the bridge between government (police) and the community," said Straub, who has also served as police chief in Indianapolis, Indiana and White Plains, NY—and now works for the Police Foundation, the leading advisory group to law enforcement agencies around the U.S. He added that the media is "critical" to the challenge of rebuilding community trust and police legitimacy.

The Importance of Transparency

Media-savvy police executives in the U.S. have understood that there are better ways to tell their organizations' stories without risking or endangering an investigation, o r infringing on the privacy rights of officers. The key element is *transparency*.

It's a hard lesson to adopt. And there are as many failures as there are successes in the field. But incorporating this strategy of openness and cooperation with the media is now essential to a modern law enforcement agency's strategy.

Winning a short-term skirmish with reporters may be satisfying in the kind of adversarial relationship that often develops between the media and law enforcement. But winning back the trust of communities —especially marginal groups— involves developing a collaborative relationship with the media that recognizes the limitations and (deadline or competitive) pressures reporters face.

It means setting the boundaries a little differently than law enforcement is used to, and it means accepting a certain amount of discomfort.

Frankness and candor work.

Tell reporters what you're at liberty to disclose, and what is off-limits: "Here's what we have, here's what we don't know." Reporters are professionals, and

they will appreciate a professional approach. Remember that a reporter who is "stonewalled" or lied to will be back the next day, spurred on by his or her editor. The easiest way to ensure that you will receive fair treatment and have a voice in shaping reporters' stories (and decreasing citizens' skepticism of your agency) is to begin by assuming that, even if the individual reporter changes, you are developing a long-term relationship with a media outlet that, like any such relationship, thrives on trust.

But accepting the principle is only a start. A productive relationship with the media also requires a **comprehensive plan** that has the flexibility to adapt to unforeseen circumstances.

How to Develop an Operational Communications Plan for Your Organization

Integrate Technology with Agency Practices and Procedures

Creating a detailed **set of procedures and principles** is essential to implementing a best-practices communications strategy. Bear in mind that in media relationships, as in police procedures, one size doesn't always fit all. So it's important to know your agency's limitations and biases. It's essential that your plan reflects your agency's operational philosophy and leadership, and makes clear to Public Information Officers (PIOs) as well as individual officers at all ranks, what kind of relationship you want to have with the media.

The communications and operational technology available to your agency needs to be incorporated into your plan from the beginning. Why this is important is best explained, on several levels, in the 2015 *"Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing."* (see reference above.)

- The use of technology can improve policing practices and build community trust and legitimacy," said the report. "But its implementation must be built on a defined policy framework with its purposes and goals clearly delineated."

- Implementing new technologies can give police departments an opportunity to fully engage and educate communities in a dialogue about their expectations for transparency, accountability and privacy.

- Technology changes quickly in terms of new hardware, software and other options. Law enforcement agencies and leaders need to be able to identify, assess, and evaluate new technology for adoption...[to] improve their effectiveness, efficiency and evolution without infringing on individual rights.

New law enforcement technology is fast developing, said the report. So standards for its use—which can be communicated to the public—are critical. That includes "auditory, visual, and biometric data", "less than lethal" technology and the development of segregated radio spectra such as FirstNet.

These standards should also address compatibility, interoperability and implementation needs both within local law enforcement agencies and across agencies and jurisdictions, and should maintain civil and human rights protections. Crucially (for our purposes), the report concludes that, "law enforcement agencies should adopt model policies and best practices for technology-based community engagement that *increases community trust and access*." [emphasis added.]

Choose Your PIOs Carefully

Select those who really like people, and are quick, articulate and enthusiastic. They must be able to respond quickly to developing events. Speed and confidence are often the essence of a PIO's job. Preparation for both requires strong knowledge of the issues, and mastering your agency's communications procedures, so that you can proceed with cool sureness if necessary. Sometimes former journalists make good PIOs—but not always! They may have crossed over to the "other side" with resentments against their former colleagues that will turn out to be counterproductive. *It's worth discreetly checking with those who know them and reviewing their relationships with their peers to make sure they will represent the image and message you want the agency to have.*

Decide who's ultimately in charge of messaging in your agency, and in what situations. Designate people who have ultimate authority, on-a-day-to-basis, to make decisions on how to best handle a particular situation.

Police Chiefs: Keep Your PIO Close

In general, the more accessible a police chief is to his ranking Public Information Officer, the more effective the implementation of the chief's policy or program will be. Ideally, the ranking PIO should be a key member of a chief's decision-making team, giving input not only on how best to message a new program or policy, but alerting a chief about their potential pitfalls in terms of community and news media response.

Skilled, experienced police communicators often enjoy the trust of citizens, and often best know the mindsets and concerns of the news media and community representatives they're dealing with on a daily basis. This may seem obvious. But in many police departments, particularly in Latin America, this commonsensical approach is not followed.

Who's In Charge?

Moreover, in too many instances in the region, situations that should be handled by police chiefs are handled by politicians (minister of security,

justice or interior). This can lead to a recipe for chaos and dysfunction – something that's particularly true in a time of crisis or natural disasters. In such situations, *it is essential that a designated spokesperson and a pre-established line of communications flow down from a police chief and be executed by a trained PIO familiar with best practices procedures for dealing with crises intervention.*

Political interference -- other than stipulating a broad policy response and monitoring police performance – flies in the face of planning, coordination and reacting swiftly to changing situations on the ground, and can only sow confusion and the appearance (if not the reality) that the police don't know what they're doing and have lost control of the situation.

Assemble a Social Media Tool-Kit

Train officers at all ranks to use it skillfully. Younger officers will be more likely, of course, to understand the potential of tools like Twitter and Facebook, but "veterans" in the senior ranks will need to acknowledge the revolutionary technological changes in the media landscape that affect how they are perceived by outsiders. Social media should be an ally to good police work, not an obstacle to it.

Best Practices Tips

There are also a number of best-practice operating principles that belong in a strategic plan and in the training of new PIOs.

a) **Reducing public fear and generating confidence is critical.**
Mastering message control is the principle tool for achieving that.

b) **Personalize your organization.**
How you professionally present yourself and describe events is a key to success. Your competency, transparency, credibility and helpfulness will dictate how journalists regard the trustworthiness of your information, particularly during a crisis situation.

c) **Language matters.**
Avoid jargon and obfuscation. Speak plainly, and communicate as one human being to another. Be prepared to translate the complexities of an investigation or a given threat that the public needs to be aware of in language that is clear and not susceptible to misinterpretation. Be aware that a quote from you—or a partial quote—can be used or interpreted differently from the way you intended it. And keep a record, preferably an audio recording, of your communications—either individually or in a press conference.

d) **Credibility is contagious.**
Be open and cooperative. Never lie. Develop relationships. Many in the

news media and public believe that police agencies are not to be trusted. Your word – your credibility – needs to be good enough to be taken at face value. Distorting facts may have a short-term value, but it will later undermine your credibility and trust, if you're found to have lied. But if you are regarded as an honest messenger, you will have made an important deposit in the bank of trust. This deposit will then be repaid with interest in future situations or police emergencies that are tough or controversial, or where you must keep certain facts from the public eye for purposes of an investigation.

Some useful lessons can be derived from these points:

1. Quick responses to a major development in your jurisdiction—a shocking murder, a violent protest, even an accusation of misconduct on the part of one of your officers —are often a mistake. While it's true that in crisis-messaging the delivery of a key piece of information enables you to stay on top of a fast-moving story, a misstep can be fatal. Your information has to be *correct*.

2. It's OK to say, "I don't know, but I'll find out." At the other extreme, as noted above, trying to sidestep hard questions is just as fatal and will trigger mistrust. Explain what you don't know, and when you may know it. This principle, too, should be stressed in your pre-planning and training.

Releasing "Bad News"

Communicating news unfavorable to your agency is part of the job of anyone who speaks for law enforcement.

As the "bad wine" comment from the NYPD's John Miller (quoted above) makes clear, trying to hide unfavorable information or sidestepping it invites public cynicism, and encourages mistrust of reporters. Many U.S. police agencies have discovered this to their detriment when dealing with potentially incendiary situations like officer-involved shootings.

One of the roots of the protests that flared up in response to the series of such shootings in vulnerable urban communities in the U.S. was the belief that police or courts were stalling attempts to investigate those incidents in hopes that the public will forget about an incident. In an era when a two- or three-minute video taken by a smartphone can go viral in a matter of hours, a statement of "no comment" is bad strategy. This is as true in Latin America and the Caribbean as it is in the U.S.—perhaps even more so, since the web and social media have become increasingly frequent tools for political pres-

sure in many countries. For example, video recorded by cellphone cameras in Brazil recently helped to expose a cover-up of killings by the police[4].

PIOs should clearly and briefly explain the decision-making process at work in responding to any major or controversial incident, provide a sense of when the process will provide answers or a resolution, and meanwhile issue periodic press releases to brief the media about their state of the investigation at each point in time.

An information vacuum will only fuel suspicions that the shooting is being covered up. The ultimate decision on this strategy, will, of course, come from your police chief.

But some guidelines already exist.

In January 2016, The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) issued a **policy paper listing** "30 Guiding Principles" for reducing officer-use-of-force. Again, while they are specific to U.S. policing needs, they offer useful lessons for law enforcement in Latin American and Caribbean jurisdictions[5].

Two of those principles focused on communications.

> "To build understanding and trust, agencies should issue regular reports...on their officers' use of force, including officer-involved shoot-

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4   "Race, Policing and Video in Brazil,"

http://thecrimereport.org/2015/12/14/2015-12-race-policing-and-video-in-brazil/

5   Guiding Principles on Use of Force,

http://www.policeforum.org/assets/30%20guiding%20principles.pdf

ings, deployment of less-lethal options, and use of canines. These reports should include discussion of racial issues and efforts to prevent all types of bias and discrimination…[and] should be published annually at a minimum, and be widely available through the agency's website and in hard copy. "

"Agencies [also] need to be transparent in providing information following use-of-force incidents," the policy paper continues. "[You] should release as much information as possible, as quickly as possible [on use-of-force and OIS], acknowledging that the information is preliminary and may change as more details unfold."

At a minimum, PERF said, agencies should release basic, preliminary information about an incident within hours of its occurrence, and should provide regular updates as new information becomes available (as they would with other serious incidents that the public and the news media are interested in).

Commander Mike Parker, Chief of Communications for the Los Angeles County Sheriffs' Department, expanded on this point by offering workshop participants the following advice:

"In building trust, people will see through "branding. You can run the risk of losing credibility if you post too much positive [or obliviously slanted] information about your department."

Your job, in short is to be a shining example of your agency, not a public relations cheerleader.

Releasing Crime and Other Justice-Related Statistics

Changing public perceptions about crime is hard. As any frustrated police chief knows, the media will highlight a bloody crime event, but will provide scarce space or time to good news about crime statistics. Anecdotal instances of crime affecting oneself or close friends and relatives, coupled with media stories about violence, often cement public views that crime is "on the rise." Crime statistics feel detached; direct or indirect experience of actual crime events feel more visceral.

To find out how people react to crime statistics, IDB investigators looked into crime perceptions in Bogota in a 2014 study (Martin Ardanaz, 2014).[6] Crime had fallen for several decades while surveys showed *Bogotanos* believed crime had gotten worse. To determine what lay behind this gap, inves-

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6   Ardanaz, Corbacho y Ruiz-Vega. Mind the Gap: Bridging the Perception and Reality of Crime Rates with Information. BID (2014), https://publications.iadb.org/handle/11319/6595

tigators visited 2,000 households and asked about crime perceptions. Some households were first provided a leaflet with data on declining crime rates. As expected, those who received the leaflet were 30% more likely to say they felt more secure than those who did not. However, the leaflet failed to sway people who strongly believed that crime was getting worse, and when investigators visited households a few months later with a follow-up survey, the belief that crime had dropped had largely dissipated.

This handicap means regularly releasing police statistics that the news media and public regard as accurate and credible is essential to a well-functioning police agency. Such statistics both help develop a positive relationship with the news media and the public, and engender and maintain support and trust in the police. This is true even if the data shows bad news that might hurt an agency's reputation in the short run.

Not doing so can lead to a far bigger, long-term downside.

Refusing to release statistics, releasing unreliable or deceptive data, or being uncooperative with inquiring reporters, will only heighten cynicism among them and within the community as to your trustworthiness. Afterwards, the news media will not believe an agency when it reports that the crime numbers are good, and pounce on it when they are bad; and reporters will form their opinions about crime trends or police misconduct through hearsay and disgruntled sources, while doing their own investigations and interpretation to fill the void in public information.

Conversely, releasing reliable data that also contains both an analysis of any problems found and an action-plan to solve or mitigate those problems, can have a positive effect beyond just that of trust-building.

It can also be a vital tool for an agency in determining its effectiveness in reducing crime, reducing illegal or out-of-policy policing and abuse of the public, and gauging a department's effectiveness in many other areas. Doing these things, in short, says to the media and public, "Yes, reducing crime and policing effectively and legally is a tough job, we're not perfect, but we're working to improve ourselves and your safety; here's what we intend to do short-term and long-term."

Remember: Most people want to respect their police; they *need* their police—particularly in vulnerable neighborhoods where crime is high. But there's no genuine respect for the police without trust and transparency.

This is especially true in many parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, where police agencies often lack credibility, and each country employs different sub-secretariats /organizational units to gather crime and other police data. After having refused to release crime statistics in 2008, Argentina is now working to enhance its security data management systems, with the aim of improving the public's perception and trust of police forces.

In the U.S., to cite another example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has also recently been criticized for both the way it compiles data, and the manner in which it's released.

Although crime statistics in the U.S. are generally available, they are largely compiled at the federal level (FBI Uniform Crime Reports). But these are often a statistical-year or more old when they arrive—much too late for any useful, immediate policy formulation.

Moreover, the FBI and other law-enforcement agencies had for decades been selective and disingenuous in collecting and releasing data that might paint law enforcement in an unfavorable light. The annual nation-wide number of officer-involved shootings and killings by police officers is a glaring example that can be found in the case study below:

CASE STUDY ONE
A Sin of Omission: Collecting and Releasing Officer-Involved Shooting Information

Integrate Technology with Agency Practices and Procedures

Traditionally, the U.S. Justice Department has kept a database of the number of officers killed in the line of duty. In 2014, a *Washington Post* investigation[7] of officer-involved shootings found that in the year 2012, the FBI reported that 48 officers were killed [in the line of duty] – 44 of them with firearms. But, the Post concluded, "no one knows" just how many "people in the United States were shot, or killed, by law enforcement officers during that year… [because] "Officials with the Justice Department [kept] no comprehensive database or record of police shootings."

Instead, as the Post found, while there are over 17,000 state and local law enforcement agencies in the U.S., the Justice Department and the FBI allowed those agencies to *voluntarily* report officer-involved shootings, which were then reported in the FBI's annual data on "justifiable [law enforcement] homicides." Consequently, in 2012 only 750 law enforcement agencies submitted data, and accurate numbers on police shootings were impossible to obtain[8].

That changed when the 2014 shooting of an unarmed 18-year-old named Michael Brown and other highly questionable shootings caused protests and critical news media coverage throughout the nation. In response, as the *Post*

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7 How many police shootings a year? No one knows,
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2014/09/08/how-many-police-shootings-a-year-no-one-knows/?utm_term=.20faf1b6055f
8   U.S. State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies Census 2008:
www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=71;

later wrote, they [as well as the *Guardian U.S.*], began building "a database of fatal police shootings. In addition to recording each shooting, research-ers gathered more than a dozen details about each case, including the age and race of the victim, whether and how the person was armed, and the cir-cumstances that led to the encounter with police." (The *Guardian US* edition developed a similar database.)

By the end of 2015, the *Post* reported that it "had identified more than 900 fatal shootings by police...By contrast, the FBI [had] recorded about 400 deaths a year over the past decade."

The result of both the public's outcry over excessive police shootings and the investigations by the *Post* and *The Guardian U.S.*, the Justice Department and the FBI were so embarrassed that they changed their policy. "'We are re-sponding to a real human outcry,"' Stephen L. Morris, assistant director of the FBI Division that oversees the Bureau's data collection told the *Post*. "'People want to know what police are doing, and they want to know why they are us-ing force. It always fell to the bottom before. It is now the highest priority.'"

Using Social Media Tools

"The use of technology can improve policing practices and build community trust and legitimacy," according to the U.S. Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). In order to build a solid foundation for law enforcement agencies in this field, PERF suggested that "law enforcement agencies should adopt model policies and best practices for technology-based community engage-ment that increases community trust and access."

It goes without saying that Twitter is fundamental to PIOs in crisis situations. It serves as your informational "headline." But it takes skills and practice to portray your message in 140 characters or less—as participants in the IDB workshop discovered in an exercise led by Cmdr. Mike Parker.

Facility in using the Twitter format should be part of every officer's training. But there should be clear guidelines about who in the agency's hierarchy uses it—and when. It can easily be abused, and there should *be clear guidelines set out regarding when it is employed, the kind of language used, the purpose of the Tweet, and who the messages should be sent to at various points in a developing case*—selected reporters, citizen bloggers, general public.

The Baltimore Police Department, for example, is now tweeting report-ers whenever a shooting occurs, giving them the opportunity to get to the shooting scene as quickly as possible. This is an enormous help to them—and a trust-builder, but there is an additional pay-off: While learning to trust the homicide "feeds," they're also learning to trust the Baltimore PD.

As in the U.S., Twitter in Latin America and the Caribbean should be widely used, as it's proven to be one of the most effective and low-cost engage-ment tools on the technology "shelf." But what about Facebook, Snapchat,

WhatsApp or other media? Each of these channels of communication should be evaluated in accordance with local usage, and when deemed appropriate incorporated into an agency's master plan and periodically reevaluated.

Police Twitter feeds are an increasingly common phenomenon. One of the best examples is the feed produced by the Los Angeles Sheriffs Department (LASD): https://twitter.com/lasdhq
The feed is produced by Cmdr. Parker (quoted above), who is among the leading experts in the use of social media by police. (See his contact info below).

Another good Spanish-language example is the "*Policia Nacional*" feed produced by Carlos Fernandez in Spain on Spanish policing, and a speaker at our conference. His Twitter feed can be accessed here@Policia. For other noteworthy examples of Twitter feeds used by Latin American police agencies, see below:

Police Twitter accounts in LAC

Country	Twitter
Argentina	@PFAOficial
Brazil	@policiafederal
Chile	@Carabdechile
Colombia	@PoliciaColombia
Ecuador	@PoliciaEcuador
Mexico	@PoliciaFedMx

https://twitter.com/PoliciaEcuador/status/735138492498477056

https://twitter.com/policia/status/734829282518671360

https://twitter.com/policia/status/735049225474445312

However, don't forget traditional, legacy media in your master planning. *While social media is widely used in Latin America and the Caribbean, traditional media outlets remain vitally important, particularly in vulnerable, rural communities, where radio rules supreme.*

What About Video?

Deploying patrol-car dashboard cameras and body-worn cameras is now seen by many crime victims, grass-roots community organizations, politicians and civil libertarians around the region as essential to holding officers accountable for their use of force. Such cameras, they believe, will capture police misconduct and provide vital evidence of exactly who was at fault.

And senior police managers as well as ranking officers often like them because it establishes that they have followed correct procedures as a protection against wrongful accusations of police misconduct.

But there is an opposing view. Some community leaders and police say the use of cameras can be counter-productive. An ordinary citizen who becomes a victim in an embarrassing or difficult situation, participants in a domestic dispute, or relatives of a mentally troubled citizen who becomes involved with a police officer, may consider a video record that ends up seen by millions on YouTube a violation of their right to privacy. In the U.S., police are allowed to turn the cameras off in specific situations. In Brazil, however, where the use of body-worn cameras is growing, the button is always "on" because of a perception that police will switch off the camera when they are in compromising situations.

What's the policy of your agency? Has it been thought out thoroughly—and can it be explained easily and transparently to the public?

PIOs should actively encourage your agency to develop policies towards these tools and form a rationale for whatever decision is taken—because inevitably—they will bear the brunt of the questioning about them. Whether such cameras or other types of streaming video are used or not, *clear and transparent policies explaining how your agency uses them and treats them are now essential components of a confidence-building strategy.*

Closely related to that is the awareness that responses will often need to be made to the release of videos taken by private citizens—that can show officers in compromising or potentially damaging situations. For better or worse, these tools cannot be ignored.

Developing and Coordinating Agreements with Other Public Safety Agencies

Law enforcement in the Latin America and Caribbean region—as in the U.S.—doesn't just deal with crime, but with other types of emergencies that threaten public order, such as natural catastrophes like fires, floods and earthquakes. Inevitably, that means other public safety organizations and first-responders are involved, which can complicate communications.

Different agencies will have different messages—and they may conflict or confuse the public.

PIOs and senior executives should plan accordingly by making agreements with other public safety organizations about communications strategy. Who will speak about what? For example, if there's a fire, only the fire department will speak about the fire, its size, the direction it's headed, etc. And only the police will communicate related traffic stories, such as road closings.

Asking Deeper Questions: Decision-Making, Communications and Building Community Policing

*Note: Much of what follows has been taken in part or in whole from a 2015 World Bank Development Report entitled: "Mind, Society and Behavior;" and rewritten and restructured for public information officers and police chiefs.[11]

Among the issues focused on in the World Bank report is the importance of reasoned, informed decision-making—a behavioral skill that has great relevance for PIOs and Police Chiefs, particularly in successively implementing and maintaining a fundamental shift in an agency such as Community Policing (CP)—and in developing the communications skills and strategies that are such a valuable component of community policing.

Recent research, according to the report, shows "that psychological, social, and cultural influences" have a "significant impact" on decision-making and human behavior; and that understanding *how* people make decisions can lead to successful outcomes in planning and implementing programs and strategies.

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11 World Development Report 2015,
http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/Publications/WDR/WDR%202015/WDR-2015-Full-Report.pdf

Even "small differences" in decision-making can have "large effects on crucial choices."

Below are some of the findings and suggestions from the report, showing how they are applicable to successful community policing, messaging and other communications planning:

a) Be aware of your own biases in decision-making, and in designing and implementing development policy. Remember to:

> **1.** Avoid "thinking automatically." Make choices deliberatively, in a studied, informed manner, don't make judgments automatically—"off-the-cuff," or based on "gut-instinct" or anecdotal evidence.
>
> **2.** Avoid "group-think," where individuals in a given culture or society share a common perspective on making sense of the world around them. People often make decisions and then act based on what others around them in their social and work environment think: New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton calls behavior among police officers and leaders living in the "Blue Cocoon," where "all your friends are cops, all your talk is cop talk, and all you hear are cop ideas."
>
> **3.** "Avoid the tendency of individuals to interpret and filter information in a manner that supports their preconceptions or hypotheses."
>
> **4.** Reduce the effects of your own biases in the planning stage by identifying the psychological and social influences on the behavior of the community you're policing, by rigorously diagnosing the mindsets of community members, and then working with their influences —rather than against them. (See case study below on Chief Hassan Aden of Greenville, South Carolina).

b) Experiment early in designing your communications plans:

> **1.** Design your plan so that it "anticipates failures and creates feedback loops" that allow you to incrementally and continuously improve your plan's strategies.
>
> **2.** Spend time, money, expertise and resources to experiment, learn, and adapt your plans and strategies to newly developing circumstances "over several cycles, redefining, re-diagnosing, and redesigning programs in a cycle of continued improvement."

c) Make sure the plan responds to your future needs.

The World Bank report also suggests a business perspective as one way to examine how well your plan is succeeding. If you were a commercial company introducing a new product, say a new brand of breakfast cereal, regular monitoring of "user satisfaction" makes the difference between acceptance and rejection. Translating that to a security organization means that each member of the hierarchy needs to understand how the plan can be useful to his or her work, increases effectiveness and enhances engagement with the public.

A good plan begins with asking the right questions. Here, for instance, is a selection of questions, to inform a gang-violence reduction plan for law enforcement. It was developed in response to the needs of the Urban Peace Academy in Los Angeles.[12]

1. What social role do gangs play in your community?
2. How might older generations of these gangs be brought into community policing and violence-reduction efforts?
3. What are the current drivers of gang violence in your community?
4. What strategies should be used to intervene?
5. What outside, non-law-enforcement partners can help reduce the violence, both short and long-term?
6. What role can PIOs play in developing solutions to the problems, ie., how can they begin to message new strategies to the community, and within their agency to maximize their impact?

This kind of questioning can easily be adapted to respond to a wide variety of public safety issues of concern to the community, such as home burglaries or street robberies.

The first crucial step, however, is finding out what those issues are from the *public*, not just what your organization thinks they are (although they may often be the same). This will involve holding well-publicized, fact-finding community meetings open to all, including police critics; the skilled use of social media; and taking to heart (and in policy-making) what community members say they want and need.

Again, asking the right questions is key.

PIOs and Senior Justice Executives should develop these questions as a *team*. Questions can be wide and general to start: What most worries you in your neighborhood? What issues should be a priority for the police? How do

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12 Urban Peace Academy Webpage
http://www.urbanpeaceinstitute.org/urban-peace-academy/

you think the police should change in the way they act? The answers should then be turned into responsive strategies developed, again, as a team.
What's important is the outcome: A set of communications strategies reflecting community input and desires, followed by goals set by management to address those concerns.

But how does such an approach work when an agency is faced with a crisis?

Managing a Crisis

Law enforcement crises come in many forms: natural disasters such as wild fires or large-scale flooding; chemical explosions and fires, de-railed trains, major traffic accidents involving injuries, death and severe traffic congestion; corruption scandals that severely undermine the public's confidence in the police or government; riots, kidnappings and sudden outbursts of murders or crime that cause panic in the community.

It's critical for law enforcement agencies to stay in control of the messaging during an unfolding crisis. That's an essential role—perhaps the most essential—in ensuring public calm and avoiding panic (and perhaps criminal behavior) that law enforcement can provide. The public looks to authorities during these times for guidance and reassurance.

Here are a few basic things to keep in mind—and pitfalls to avoid. Some incorporate or build on ideas already mentioned above.

1. **Communicate Early**
Get information out to the media and community as quickly as possible through some initial necessary tweets. Journalists and viewers of your agency website, want Twitter information immediately. (Twitter is your newspaper headline!)

2. **Sequence Your Messages**
As you engage your audience, begin to sequence your messaging through a layered approach: Twitter, website, story—an unfolding story—one that you're now directly involved in constructing. The more carefully sequenced your message is, the more frequency of contact you make with reporters, and the more input you'll therefore have in building the story.

3. **"Flood" the Media**
Distribute as much as you can release to reporters and media outlets—not just because it's your job, but because it's an opportunity for you and your agency to shine, while dominating the number of feeds reporters are devouring during a crisis. There are only so many sources where a reporter can find rapidly developing information during a breaking crisis. So try to make yourself a highly valued voice to which they'll constantly return. *In short, keep the media tuned into your message and wanting more; and make you and your messages are central to a reporter's information gathering.*

But what information should you be giving journalists? Comdr. Mike Parker, of the Los Angeles County Sheriffs' Department has a simple answer: "Everything you can."

Remember: *Immediate information is important to the media and the public, but not significant in and of itself.* Reporters and their audiences want context as well. So build your story as you're sequencing your information-flow. Then—once you have the entire story—tell it as soon as you can. It will influence how journalists report their stories, and how the public will gauge your department's success in handling the crisis.

Here are some additional tips:

a) Never say "No comment." If you don't have any new information on the crisis, provide them with something that's not confidential. Police write everything down, you'll find of plenty ancillary information to fill the gaps.

b) If there are requests for police statistics, release as many as you can; if you can't, quickly explain why.

c) Post pictures as soon as you can, and link them to television stations; news directors will appreciate it.

d) Share good stories with the media and community. Attempt to get police officers to talk to the media. It's usually best to have just one spokesperson, particularly during a crisis. But if an officer has done something heroic or exceptional, try to get him or her to talk about it.

e) Identify the leading "Twitterati" (the individuals with the largest number of twitter followers) in your city and you'll get a picture of what's trending at any given moment, which in turn may allow you to identify developing concerns before they turn into "unfriendly" stories that will be tougher to deal with.

CASE STUDY TWO
Confronting a Crisis: Two Examples of Police Inter-Agency Cooperation

Case Study (A); The Beltway Sniper Shootings (U.S.)

In late 2002, a cluster of random killings by a two-man sniper team occurred

in the Washington, D.C. area. Focused in Montgomery County, Maryland, a series of eight killings of innocent civilians occurred over a period of 23 days. The case became known as the "Beltway Sniper shootings."

 "Citizens were panicking, and the pressure to find the shooters was rapidly growing" says Maurice Possley, a Pulitzer-Prize winning journalist who incorporated the story into a role-playing scenario in real-time crisis management for participants during Session Three of the IDB symposium.

The shootings were taking place in Montgomery County, in nearby Washington, D.C. and in Virginia, crossing the jurisdictions not only of the three local police agencies—but (because of the inter-state nature of the crimes) had also fallen under the investigative authority of federal agencies like the FBI.

Traditionally, when such situations occurred in high-profile cases, each agency would jealously guard their leads and information, hoard their resources and fight for control over the case. But following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. that began to change. American law enforcement agencies—now facing the strong possibility of future terrorist attacks—began to see the necessity of effectively working together.

In the sniper shootings, The Montgomery County Police, by mutual agreement, took the lead in the investigation; and its chief—Charles Moose—became the lead law enforcement spokesperson. That effectively provided a single voice (and face) responsible for updating the area's five million residents about the latest turns in the investigation, and reassuring them that law enforcement was working to keep them safe. For the media, the single-spokesperson approach also ensured a reliable and continual source of information that could counteract the spread of fear-mongering rumors.

As the role-playing scenario illustrated (participants played the roles of media covering the case), this single-spokesperson approach proved to be an effective media strategy: It ensured a reliable and continual source of information that could counteract the spread of fear-mongering rumors. During the real event, other law enforcement agencies were not ignored; they participated as part of the team that contributed updated information and support. As the *New York Times* reported, "Dozens of federal agents [gave] their support, providing forensic analysis, psychological and geographic profiles, computer data runs and helicopters."

One interesting byproduct of controlling the message in this way proved useful to the investigation itself. At his regularly televised press conferences Chief Moose begin baiting, disparaging and challenging the snipers, and eventually they responded by contacting Moose. After each note or statement by the snipers, Moose would discuss his next moves and come to a consensus with top officials from the FBI and other federal agencies about how to next proceed.

At the same times, as the Times' also reported, "every word in [the snipers'] statements was evaluated by experts in serial killings, crisis negotiation and criminal behavior."

As in most investigations, there were flaws. Leads were missed. Information was ignored, and it took 23 days to capture snipers who continued to be actively involved in random shootings. But by pooling their resources, working together inter-jurisdictionally, centralizing the investigation, and designating an authoritative lead spokesman as the key interlocutor for the media, the police were able to effectively manage a developing crisis, and prevent further loss of life.

Case Study (B): The Colombian Principles

Colombia has had its share of public security attacks. At the seminar for police communicators, former Justice and Interior Minister of Colombia **Fernando Carrillo** said authorities in his country had developed ten basic principles to guide security forces in crisis management as a result of lessons they learned from major episodes such as kidnappings and violent attacks.

1. **Trust:** Police need to gain the trust of citizens to gain credibility during a crisis.

2. **Transparency:** The public is smarter than authorities believe. Hiding or twisting facts will come back to haunt officials.

3. **Coordination:** Given the number of official entities that can be involved in a crisis situation (justice ministries, police, military, prosecutors, among others), getting this right is crucial.

4. **Politics Matter:** Carrillo said police chiefs must not only be good communicators, but have an understanding of political currents influencing each crisis situation as well as the motivations of the perpetrators.

5. Get Ahead of the Story: The first response is critical. Taking control of the message is should be an agency's first step, especially in a social media age where rumors spread quickly.

6. Speak With One Voice: Centralize the source of communications and set up a crisis center, if necessary.

7. Balance: One of the hardest challenges of a crisis is to balance the needs of an investigation, the privacy of victims, the ability to investigate a crime, and the right of the public to be informed.

8. Technology Alone is No Panacea: Institutions that employ the technology must be solid, too.

9. Capacity Building: Citizens and civil society in general must understand how they can help prevent violence.

10. Respect Human Rights: According to Carrillo, human rights represent the "backbone of the rule of law;" they cannot be trampled during an investigation or during a crisis communications effort.

Part Two

Communicating Incidents of Violence (VAW) against Women

Developing Polices and Enforcing Laws Aimed at Reducing and Preventing Violence Against Women

VAW is a serious problem throughout the world, and it is prevalent in Latin America and the Caribbean. U.S. law enforcement has developed a number of practices and approaches for dealing with domestic abuse situations as well as other cases outside the domestic environment, such as in public transport, street violence, among others. But as a special panel in the Washington DC workshop made clear, police agencies in the region as well as the media have failed to focus on this as a priority, despite the fact that it remains one of the top human rights issues in the Americas.

Here's why:

1. Over a third of the region's women report incidents of physical or sexual violence by their partners.[13]

2. Between 28 to 64 percent of the region's women do not report the violence they experience.[14]

3. Growing evidence suggests that when children witness or suffer violence directly, they may be at increased risk of becoming aggressors or victims in adulthood.[15]

4. 14 of the 25 countries with the worst femicide rates are in Latin America,[16] The Central American countries of Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua lead the region in this regard. Femicide also accounts for seven deaths in any 24-hour period in Mexico.[17]

5. Impunity is a major concern. In Mexico, for instance, just 10 people were sentenced for the crime of femicide in 2012-2013.

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13 OMS, Violencia contra la Mujer en América Latina y el Caribe: Análisis comparativo de datos poblacionales de 12 países, 2013.
14 Pan American Health Organization
http://www.paho.org/arg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1109:extendida-violencia-contra-mujer-12-paises-america-latina-caribe&Itemid=227
15   Pan American Health Organization,
http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=20441&Itemid=2518
16 Everyday aggression,
http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21586575-laws-punish-domestic-violence-are-too-often-honoured-breach-everyday-aggression
17 UN Women media
http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/media

Nevertheless, some progress has been made:

1. Since 2005, Chile, Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, Argentina and Venezuela have focused on legislation to address violence against women[18] in the areas of migration, trafficking and conflict and crisis situations.

2. The underlying concept of the new legislation is that violence is a multidimensional problem, with multiple manifestations at the domestic level and in the public sphere. It has shifted the traditional focus of intra-family violence, to also include women who are victims of violence in the workplace, in the streets, in conflict situations and in public transportation.

3. "Incremental advances" are being made in the judiciary, the services to victims of violence and police focus on the problem.[19]

But important challenges remain. The attitude of both the police and media to such crimes is often superficial and one-sided. Attention is paid to what the woman did to get beaten or sexually abused, as opposed to focusing on the assailant.

Communications policy (and of course police responses) should focus instead on the victim. This requires department-wide training of police managers, officers and PIOs that focuses on some of the cultural barriers to seriously addressing violence against women.

That includes:

* Eliminating the cultural stereotypes that excuse rape or domestic violence, and instead blame the victims of violence for "asking for it" by dressing or "acting in a provocative manner or by "provoking a crime of passion.'"

* Having police and PIOs understand their own preconceptions and prejudices in communicating and enforcing violence against women.

* Developing a nomenclature that includes terms sensitive to the victim, and that redefines terminology to fit the crime—again, without the structural cultural bias against women that still remains in Latin America.

* **Clearly defining the types of violence** carried out against women, and amassing statistics to educate the media about the long-prevalent discrimination against women in prosecuting crimes of violence against them.

* Making abundantly clear that discouraging women not to report cases of domestic violence—or to hint that the victim herself was at fault—**will not be tolerated.**

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18 *Ibídem*
19 *OpCit 16*

This training must be undertaken, implemented and enforced with the degree of seriousness and professionalism that is reserved for other crimes of violence. The women of our societies deserve nothing less.

Below are some other models and strategies for what police agencies and PIOs can do to address VAW, based partly on comments and suggestions from speakers at the November 2015 IDB Workshop, and on innovative approaches already underway in the region from reports by the United Nations[20] and The Economist[21]:

1. Strive to create "a climate of justice" by seriously enforcing laws designed to prevent and reduce violence against women, and communicating the fact that this is a priority for your agency.

2. Actively work to raise public awareness of the issue, by making clear that VAW affects all sectors of society and institutions—including members of your own organization.

3. Set up procedures and police sub-stations for women to report crimes, and receive medical care, psychological counseling and legal aid. (13 Latin American countries have already done so, and levels of reporting have increased. Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela have also established courts dedicated to cases of domestic violence.)

4. Distribute "panic buttons" to VAW victims—as has been done in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina—to help enforce "restraining orders against abusive former partners. When triggered, the devices use GPS technology to help the police track down the victim quickly.

5. Train your entire police agency on how to properly communicate issues of gender violence, with special training and emphasis on understanding their own preconceptions and prejudices in violence against women (often it is the police themselves who encourage women not to report cases of domestic violence, or hint that the victim was at fault).

6. Familiarize your officers in the careful use of language you use, avoiding terms that minimize the culpability of the offender (it was a "crime of passion") or suggestions that the victim "had it coming."

7. Instruct all staff and officers in the precise terms to be used when communicating cases of domestic violence – most specifically clearly define the types of violence carried out against the victim.

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20 *OpCit 17*

21 *OpCit 16*

8. Be prepared to provide relevant statistics that allow the media to understand the phenomenon of violence against women in its wider context.

Media Awareness of VAW

Justice PIOs can make a critical difference in how the media covers violence against women. *If police agencies are seen to take the issue seriously, the press will be encouraged to change what has often been criticized as "imbalanced" reporting.* Traditionally, Latin American media coverage has often treated violence and domestic abuse from a superficial perspective that tends to demean victims.

Law enforcement agencies can raise the profile of this issue—and they have a responsibility to do so—by cooperating with women's advocacy groups, counseling centers and other sourcesto facilitate reporting of abuses and promoting greater public awareness in their communities.

They can at the same time be pro-active with reporters to communicate the stories of women (with due regard for privacy) who have sought help from the courts and law enforcement and publicize the punishment of offenders.[22]

What can media do?

Contextualize	Define Crime	Mention ways out
Describe the violence experienced by the victim	Consult sources and experts	Mention support and resources available
Present statistical figures relevant to the situation	Avoid reporting as an exception	Report cases with exemplary resolution
		Report progress and women in position of power

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22 OpCit 16

What can media avoid?

Sensationalism	• Avoid "Crimes" or "Events" sections • Avoid the show
Romanticize	• For love • To "recover" their honor
Minimize the crime	• "Just" a threat • Maritial fight
Decrease responsibility	• Passional crime; jealousy • Out of control; under influence of alcohol • She had a lover; she hung out whith friends

Source: From presentation delivered by Gabriela Vega in the IDB ¨2nd annual Journalism Training course "¿Se puede prevenir el crimen en América Latina?", February 2015.

CASE STUDY THREE
Reporting on Violence against Women

A Case Study of Select News Media in Seven Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean" for the International Development Bank (IDB) by Luísa Abbott Galvão; December, 2015 [23]

This IDB data-based study examines some of the problems with VAW and gender bias in seven Latin American countries, and points out the pitfalls journalists in the region should avoid. It is worth reading as well for PIOs and Justice Communications specialists, since many of the misconceptions and distortions about VAW are similarly seen in law enforcement agencies.

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23 Reporting on violence against women,
https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/7355/ICS_DP_Reporting_on_Violence_against_Women.pdf?sequence=1

Key Findings:

1. Print news media in the seven countries studied… are "misleadingly producing stories about abused women [based] on the outlandish actions of aberrant males, while the broader issues underpinning violence against women [were] left unchallenged.

2. "The role of male perpetrators is rendered invisible by the news media…by placing accountability for ending violence on the women experiencing it."

3. "Journalistic understanding of justice being successfully carried out in VAW cases is [often tied to] the number of convictions for the crimes committed. But this is at the expense of recognizing a fundamental need to change underlying gender norms and address the context in which this violence is occurring."

4. "It is essential that more focus be placed on the education of men to prevent violence against women. The news media can play a role by covering this point specifically."

5. The news media should report on how women "suffer from violence disproportionately around the world; [and that this] is an unequivocally systemic and pernicious issue that continues to erode [Latin American] society."

6. Journalists should also focus on how:

a) VAW "has far reaching consequences in society, including public costs, disruptions to economic productivity, and intergenerational effects."

b) VAW "cannot be stopped without addressing unequal power relations between men and women across society."

c) Cultural values regarding VAW are so strong that it results in relatively low levels of women seeking help after incidents of VAW; data-studies "point to ingrained familial and societal norms, economic dependence, shame, fear of retaliation, lack of recourse, not knowing where to go," as the specific reasons for this phenomenon.

d) If VAW is not treated carefully by the media, it only "compounds and perpetuates the incidences of violence against women…and therefore it is "essential that news media actors be sensitized to this issue in a way that supports the global movement to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women."

Some sources:

- IDB brochure: indigenous peoples and African descendants.[24]

- IDB "domestic violence an ongoing threat" [25]

- IDB Discussion Paper: Reporting on Violence Against Women [26]

- Otras miradas a la información. Recopilación de herramientas de género y comunicación". Servicio de Noticias de la Mujer Latinoamericana y el Caribe, 2010.

- Guía Pautas para una cobertura periodística con enfoque de género y generaciones
http://www.inmujeres.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/18258/6/innova.front/conse-jo_nacional_consultivo_de_lucha_contra_la_violencia_domestica

- Manual de género para periodistas PNUD
http://www.eird.org/orange-day/docs/genero/manual-de-genero-para-pe-riodistas-pnud.pdf

- Violencia basada en género y generaciones: una mirada desde la comu-nicación
http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Montevideo/pdf/CI-ViolenciaGeneroMiradaComunicacion.pdf

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24 Gender and diversity IDB,
http://www.iadb.org/en/topics/gender-indigenous-peoples-and-african-descendants/vaw-brochure,8014.html
25 Domestic Violence: An Ongoing Threat to Women in Latin America and the Caribbean,
http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2001 DomesticViolenceAnOngoingThreattoWomen inLatinAmericaandtheCaribbean.aspx
26 *OpCit 23*

Part Three

Community Policing and Social Media

Building Trust & Legitimacy Through Community Policing and Social Media Strategies

How to apply old and new communications channels to working with indigenous and impoverished communities, immigrants, LGBTQ, youth, and vulnerable populations who are victims of crime

Why Community Policing Matters

Until recently, "Community Relations" were viewed by most U.S. police agencies as secondary to their primary mission of preserving law and order. In the words of Houston, Texas Police Chief Charles McCelland, "Pre-Ferguson, you were held responsible only for the crime rate – now it's community relations."

Some police chiefs don't like this new development; others are embracing it. A new generation of police chiefs in the U.S. has come to understand that unless their agencies consciously develop "legitimacy" in the eyes of the people they are sworn to serve and protect, and unless they treat people fairly, their efforts to prevent crime and bring wrongdoers to justice will be crippled.

"Community Policing" is also now an important element of police strategy across Latin America. Senior managers in countries as different as the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua have prided themselves on their use of the concept.

Community policing is not a one-size-fits-all concept.

To be effective different strategies have to be developed to meet the challenges of policing various communities and groups. But the basic *principles* of community policing remain the same: Act as a public servant working to strengthen a community, and not like an occupying force beating them down.

Treat people fairly. Strive to be seen as a legitimate, necessary force for good in a neighborhood. Avoid even the appearance of corruption. Be honest open, polite and fair in your personal behavior and in your interpersonal relationships with the public.

Consult and partner with community leaders, grass-roots activists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies to enhance public safety while addressing the concerns of the community, as they express those concerns.

Translating the concept through effective communications and other strategies is the key to changing the way police are viewed in impoverished or marginalized communities.

A series of studies by leading U.S. criminologists, including Tom Tyler, Tracey Meares,[27] David L. Weisburd and Anthony A. Braga[28] describe the philosophical principles underpinning community policing on the street:

1. Treat people fairly. Their studies show that how people are treated in their interaction with the police, and whether or not they felt they were being treated *fairly*, was, in many cases, more important to them than how their police encounter was finally adjudicated.

2. Deeply intertwined with "fairness" is the concept of "police legitimacy" and the notion, as Tyler puts it, that "people obey the law and cooperate with legal authorities if and when they view legal authorities as legitimate." The fairness of police behavior—not the fear of police force and the threat of punishment—Tom Taylor has written, "creates [police] legitimacy."

3. Listen to what your community is saying about you and your agency by partnering with community leaders, grass-roots activists and NGOs and government agencies working with "at-risk-youth" to create a new model of community policing that is effective, inclusive and transparent.

In short, an agency that respects and is aware of human rights and the need to punish police abuses when they occur is not only on the path to lawful, democratic policing, but also on the road to *effective* policing. If community members fear or disrespect police officers, they are unlikely to interact with them even to report a crime, or to be cooperative when they are called upon to help in identifying suspects or serving as witnesses.

Building Trust is a Long- Term Endeavor.

It involves the nurturing of multiple relationships over months and years of hard work (and it can be overturned overnight with a clumsy or aggressive tactics).

Communications is at the heart of it.

That cannot be accomplished in any meaningful, sustainable way without changing the culture and values of a police organization, which is of course

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27 The Salience of Social Contextual Factors in Appraisals of Police Interactions with Citizens: A Randomized Factorial Experiment,
http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10940-014-9216-7#/page-1

28 Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives,
https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=QA04JQBh__sC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=tracey+meares+anthony+braga+study+on+community+policing&ots=pEpstxroQt&sig=34Gztymg9FGrqq-Rm_YLw7suiGE#v=onepage&q&f=false

something that needs to begin at the top—and is beyond the responsibility of communications specialists. But the development of a "story" and an image is a task for everyone in the organization.

Making clear, for instance, that an agency respects and is aware of human rights and the need to punish abuses when they occur is not only the path to lawful, democratic policing; it's also the road to *effective* policing. If community members fear or disrespect police officers, they are unlikely to be cooperative when they are called on to help in identifying suspects or serving as witnesses.

So how transparent should a police organization be about its efforts to reform internal governance and how officers interact with the public?

The answer: as much as possible!

This, of course is easier said than done—particularly in countries facing high unemployment and limited resources. Still, in Honduras, for example, police forces are being radically restructured and reformed with financial support from the IDB.[29]

But to succeed, the efforts to make change have to be sincere, and have the strong support of a police chief and his or her staff; and, in some countries, of government or the political leadership as well.

Additionally, a meaningful community-policing plan must have at its aspirational heart, the principal that *lasting, transformative* change is the core goal of community policing, and that it will not come easily or quickly.

The process simultaneously involves changing the behavior and culture of both a police department and a community. Each step forward is fragile and

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29 Honduras fires top police officials to purge criminal links ,
http://www.reuters.com/article/us-honduras-corruption-idUSKCN0XR01D

hard to build on and maintain, and some conditions—like endemic pover-ty—are largely beyond a police department's ability to impact. Nevertheless, community policing can play a key role in improving civil society, while in the process avoiding becoming a flash point for civil unrest and rebellion.

Conversely, if police remain corrupt even *after* reform efforts, cynicism among the public will only deepen. A sense of transparency is a good anti-dote against corruption (real and perceived).

Social Media's Role as an Engagement Tool in Community Policing

Latin American countries share the characteristics of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multilingual society. That often complicates attempts to deliver police messages across boundaries. Nevertheless, some key human charac-teristics transcend cultures, such as the aspiration and need to be treated with respect, dignity and truthfulness. PIOs can play vital roles in building community cohesion and legitimacy through the skillful use of social media.

A key to PIOs playing a vital role in building such community cohesion and legitimacy is through the skillful use of social media tools.

Ben Gorban, a Project Coordinator for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (and a presenter at the IDB-CMCJ Symposium), thinks that such tools can help "law enforcement connect with the community" by:

> **1.** Introducing your agency to community members in the same way as police officers introduce themselves to people on the street and in their homes; and then engaging them "in open and honest dialogue in a strategic and effective way" – saving time for busy officers to save time for other police work.

> **2.** Aiming social media messages directly at specific groups within the community.

Spanish-speaking populations are growing across the U.S., but the language barrier has historically prevented them from reaching out to law enforce-ment to report abuses or crimes. Police agencies have begun to respond by creating Spanish-language Facebook pages and Twitter accounts, and hiring Spanish-speaking employees. (An additional problem of course has been the marginalization of undocumented immigrants who fear deportation if they make contact with police.)

The parallel problem in Latin America and the Caribbean is the cultural and linguistic isolation of many indigenous groups from law enforcement and

justice agencies. Effective communications strategies should take into account these groups, using multilingual materials and employees who recognize their special needs and speak their language.

Communications specialists of course can only tell a good story to their communities if officers, sergeants and commanders on the street sincerely engage in community policing. But *they can also play an important role behind the scenes in explaining to individual officers and senior managers the connection between how they carry themselves in the community and the image the agency hopes to convey.*

PIOs can and should push for changing procedures of their agencies to improve two-way communications between community leaders and police.

They can, for example:

- Develop phone access lines;

- Promote regular meetings or "town halls";

- Bring chiefs or senior managers to informal conversations with influential community or religious leaders;

- Create accessible web pages where communities and law enforcement can interact.

A good PIO can be a leader in promoting understanding and comprehension on the part of members of his agency to the needs of individual and marginalized groups. Boasting to community leaders of the number of arrests and the amount of crime reduction is not as effective as developing partnerships in *crime prevention*.

New attention is being drawn in the U.S., partly as a result of the controversies over the past several years, to concepts like "harm-focused policing", and procedural justice, in which the proper and respectful treatment of suspects—and the way they are handled in the justice system, helps set the tone for "smarter" policing that helps strengthen community-police cohesion.

"Community partnerships...and open communication with the public are critical," Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck recently wrote.

"The legitimacy of the whole criminal justice system...starts with the pub-

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30 Charlie Beck: The real Ferguson effect in L.A.,
http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-0211-beck-ferguson-effect-lapd-20160211-story.html

lic's perception of policing. Every day, officers have to take actions that are often misunderstood or unpopular, most especially the use of physical, even deadly, force. Every community — including people of color and residents of poor neighborhoods — needs to have faith that officers will apply force in the right way, at the right time and for the right reasons. It isn't sufficient anymore... [to] simply say that police officers used force appropriately..., after the fact. Without legitimacy, law enforcement will always struggle." [30]

Professor Jerry Ratcliffe, Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice at Temple University, offers an additional caution: "It takes 4 to 14 police interactions with the public to undue one negative interaction."

As in the U.S., however, many of those community policing approaches suffer from the failure to recognize that *good communications is the foundation of an effective community-policing strategy*. Unless law enforcement agencies can explain what they are doing and why, communities—particularly those whose members have been subject to discrimination or victimization by the majority (indigenous peoples, racial and ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ)—are likely to see law enforcement as a hostile or 'occupying' force.

Creating a Community Policing Operational and Communications Plan:

Building Relationships with Minority Communities, and with Elected and Appointed Officials

First, give community members a voice in creating your plan, and listen to what they're saying about your agency. See local problems directly through their eyes, and learn why indigenous people and other communities of color don't trust the police.

The Los Angeles Police Department has been conducting community surveys to get that information. The goal, says Chief Charlie Beck, is not only to reduce crime, but to give residents an opportunity to communicate to police "how [community residents] feel about us and public safety."

Second, design a community-policing communications plans in coordination with managers at every level of the organization, beginning with the local police station. Each community policed by your agency has specific needs, different community types of community leaders, and specific problems they want solved. Solving them is the job of those local field commanders; understanding and communicating their solutions via social media is your job.

CASE STUDY FOUR

The Story of Greenville, South Carolina

The police force in Greenville, a small city in South Carolina, was a typical example of a law enforcement agency that paid little attention to community needs—and suffered the consequences: hostility and non-cooperation, and tension between officers and local populations. In Greenville (population 90,000), crime and shootings were twice as high then as Alexandria, Virginia – a city of 160,000.

In 2014, Hassan Aden was appointed the new chief and began a successful transformation which has turned Greenville into a model of what can be ac-complished with limited resources. Aden has now become a private consultant after also serving as Director of Research and Programs at the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The measures he laid out are worth examining.

The steps he took in a presentation to the IDB workshop as well as an article in *Police Chief* Magazine,[31] follow many of the approaches outlined above, start-ing with building an operational community-policing communications plan.

One of his first steps was hiring a new communications chief. He persuaded one of the city's most well-known TV journalists—a woman—to take the job. He felt that having a communications person who not only understood the pressures of the media but could speak their language was critical to chang-ing the image of his department.

Other steps he took included:

> "Developing and mentoring the department's personnel...to maintain and increase effectiveness;" promoting officer well-being, and strongly focusing on "career development strategies, training and mentoring." (As LAPD Chief Charlie Beck once put it: "You can't expect police offi-cers to treat people on the street with respect and dignity if they're not treated with respect and dignity within their own department."

> Building better relationships between the department and the commu-nity; particularly in minority communities traditionally suspicious of the police -including an explicit focus on working with at- risk youth...through a "Focused Deterrence Strategy," while addressing crime hotspots to pre-vent and reduce crime and disorder.

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31 Inviting the Community into the Police Strategic Planning Process, http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=display&article_id=3142&issue_id=102013%20;%20%20http://www.greenvillenc.gov/home/showdocument?id=524%20)

Establishing police legitimacy and community receptiveness by first posing a simple question that every communications specialist should ask of his or her police force: "Are you listening to what your community is saying about you?"

Aden started by soliciting community input: meeting with media representatives, community leaders, student, business and homeowners associations and local media representatives; and then including them in the development of the Greenville's "Strategic Plan 2014-16."

The new plan emphasized crime prevention over a philosophy of arrest and strict enforcement.

"One of the most innovative things about this Community Strategic Plan," Aden later pointed out, "is how it was developed…

We held a retreat which was professionally facilitated and included members of the communities we serve. These citizens worked with police employees…creating our goals for the next three years. The inclusion of citizens in this process was revolutionary and unprecedented…underscoring our commitment to a new model of community policing that is effective, inclusive and transparent.[32]

"The Plan," Aden continued, "is now a 'live' document with a regular review each year to ensure that our goals are still relevant and meaningful;" and allows for emerging new priorities… to be addressed. "As we report back to the community, they will see [the Plan] change – and new goals and action items will emerge out of our discussions."

In Latin America—where there are national police forces with large bureaucracies—it is often difficult to get these strategies approved, and for them to filter down to local communities. So local police chiefs need to develop best-practices strategic community policing plans—plans that will provide their leaders with the political "cover" that will enable approval and support.

Using the approaches and principles outlined above as a guide, there's no reason why PIOs and their senior managers shouldn't be able to duplicate Aden's success!

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32 Greenville Public Information Officer,
http://www.greenvillenc.gov/government/police/public-information-officer

Communications Best Practices: Lessons Learned

1. PIOs have a critical role in creating community trust, acceptance and legitimacy of a law enforcement agency. Listen to what the community is saying about your officers and your agency; partner with community leaders, grass-roots activists and NGOs and other government agencies working with justice-involved members of the community, such as "at-risk-youth" to build a new model of community policing that is effective, inclusive and transparent. Establish a clear communications with operational leaders of the agency so you can serve as a channel for grassroots information.

2. Develop your agency's story. Community trust-building cannot be accomplished without changing the culture and values of a police organization, an effort that needs to begin at the top. But the development of a "story" about how and why an agency is becoming a community-policing organization, and having that image take root, is a task for everyone in the organization, and particularly PIOs, who will be messaging that story to the community and news media.

3. Develop a detailed set of procedures and principles—including those that involve technology—into a Master Communications plan. That's essential to implementing a best-practices communications strategy. In community-police relationships, one size doesn't always fit all. Your plan should strongly reflect your agency's operational phi-

losophy and leadership, and make clear to PIOs as well as to individual officers at all ranks, what kind of relationship you want to have with the community and the news media.

4. **Treat the press as an ally.** Encourage your agency to understand that perceiving the media as a hostile force is almost always counterproductive. **Instead, treat the media as a "bridge" between your agency and the community, recognizing its critical role in fostering trust and police legitimacy.** Remember that the key watchwords for PIOs in interacting with the media are: *transparency and candor.* A reporter who is "stonewalled" or lied to will be back; they won't go away but their subsequent stories will reflect skepticism if not outright hostility. To ensure fair treatment and a voice for your agency in shaping reporters' stories (and decreasing community skepticism of your agency), start by developing long-term trusting relationships with media outlets and with individual reporters.

5. **Strive to create "a Climate of Justice" in communicating VAW.** Focus on seriously enforcing laws designed to prevent and reduce violence against women (and their children); on changing the cultural norms, attitudes and daily practices of police agencies and prosecuting authorities; and on actively working to raise public awareness through community policing that reflects this new climate.

Selected resources

Statistics

"Costos del Crimen y la Violence en el bienestar en America Latina y el Caribe" (BID), Laura Jaitman, editora
https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/7246/ICS_MON_Los_costos_del_crimen_y_la_violencia_en_el_bienestar_en_Am%C3%A9rica_Latina_y_el_Caribe.pdf?sequence=1

Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics (UNODC) reports at:
https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime.html

Global Study on Homicide: Trends/Context/Data (UNODC: 2013)
https://www.unodc.org/documents/gsh/pdfs/2014_GLOBAL_HOMICIDE_BOOK_web.pdf

Blogs

Qué pueden hacer los medios de prensa para prevenir violencia contra la mujer? (Norma Peña, Sin Miedos Blog/BID)
http://blogs.iadb.org/sinmiedos/2015/12/28/los-medios-de-comunicacion-y-la-vcm/

"Qué debe hacer la policía para comunicar mejor en una crisis?" (Pablo Bachelet, Sin Miedos blog/BID)
http://blogs.iadb.org/sinmiedos/2015/11/30/que-debe-hacer-la-policia-para-comunicar-mejor-en-una-crisis/

Citizen Security

"Citizen Security: Conceptual Framework and Empirical Evidence" (IDB)"
https://publications.iadb.org/handle/11319/5684?locale-
attribute=en#sthash.reduLTmd.dpuf

Journalism In Latin America

"Deadliest Countries for Journalists in Latin America" (Journalism in the
Americas-U of Texas Blog)
https://knightcenter.utexas.edu/blog/00-16553-cpjs-list-deadliest-
countries-journalists-2015-includes-brazil-mexico-colombia-and-gua

U.S. Materials

Community Policing (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics)
http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=81

President's Task Force on 21st-Century Policing (Final Report, May 2015)
http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf

Violence Against Women

"Reporting on Violence against Women: A Case Study of Select News Media
in Seven Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean" by Luísa Abbott
Galvão (IDB: December,2015) https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/
handle/11319/7355/ICS_DP_Reporting_on_Violence_against_Women.
pdf?sequence=1

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About the IDB and CMCJ

About the CMCJ

The Center on Media, Crime and Justice at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City trains journalists and communicators in criminal justice and related fields, through fellowships, capacity-building programs, seminars and exchanges with practitioners, editors, police, court and prison officials, reporters, scholars and advocates. It has conducted over 40 programs since its founding in 2006 for U.S. and overseas participants, and produces an online daily news and resource service called The Crime Report. Its primary mission is to promote better-informed public debate on the complex 21st-century challenges of law enforcement, public security and justice in a globalized urban society.

About the IDB

We work to improve lives in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through financial and technical support for countries working to reduce poverty and inequality, we help improve health and education, and advance infrastructure. Our aim is to achieve development in a sustainable, climate-friendly way. With a history dating back to 1959, today we are the leading source of development financing for Latin America and the Caribbean. We provide loans, grants, and technical assistance; and we conduct extensive research. We maintain a strong commitment to achieving measurable results and the highest standards of increased integrity, transparency, and accountability.

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