Crime and Violence

Obstacles to Development in Latin American and Caribbean Cities

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Today, there are more and more cities innovating with crime and violence prevention programs. Ensuring the safety and security of citizens is one of the most important functions—some might even say the primary function—of municipal governments. Owing to their proximity to the local population, mayors and other local authorities are particularly well positioned to play a central role in designing, implementing, and evaluating strategies to make cities safer and more secure. Various Latin American and Caribbean cities are experimenting with innovative, comprehensive, and evidence-based approaches to preventing and reducing crime and violence. The most promising strategies have achieved a balance between prevention and control measures to effectively reduce crime. They frequently entail improved police and intelligence effectiveness, strengthened management capacities, prioritizing prevention among the most vulnerable groups, increased community participation—including the private sector—and a strategic commitment to new technologies, including data analytics and machine-learning tools.

**Keywords:** cities, local government, urban crime, victimization, violence
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Crime and violence are a common threat to Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), but their manifestations vary across countries, cities, and neighborhoods. Reducing and preventing crime is fundamental to achieving sustainable development in the region, and local governments are strategically positioned to tackle this challenge.

Today, more and more cities are innovating with crime and violence prevention programs. Ensuring the safety and security of citizens is one of the most important functions—some might even say the primary function—of municipal governments. Owing to their proximity to the local population, mayors and other local authorities are particularly well positioned to play a central role in designing, implementing, and evaluating strategies to make cities safer and more secure. And while there are obvious benefits to be gained from improving urban security, in many parts of the world, including LAC, there are few incentives and limited capacity for local governments to play a more active role in improving citizen security.

Between 1950 and 2010, the proportion of people living in cities increased from 30 to 80 percent. There are more than 55 cities with populations of one million or more
and over 2,000 cities driving the region’s economic growth. Notwithstanding the many benefits the region’s cities have delivered, security is still one of the top concerns for citizens. LAC features some of the most dangerous urban centers on the planet: 41 of the 50 most murderous cities are located there. In response to this issue, the region has given rise to a multitude of remarkable innovations at the city level to promote security and safety.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach for cities to deliver safety and security. As with most social policies, strategies must be tailored to the specific characteristics of a city. What works outside the region may not necessarily generate similar effects in LAC. The region is characterized by its high level of urban informality, with low-income and vulnerable groups pushed to marginal and peripheral areas. Despite improvements in development, poverty has urbanized and now encompasses roughly 25 percent of the urban population. Today, at least 160 million inhabitants of the region live in low-income informal settlements without property titles nor access to basic services. Deep social and spatial divides in cities continue to increase inequality and create fertile ground for crime to thrive. It is precisely in these and other neighborhoods that organized crime groups, street gangs, and private security forces are replacing the state.

Insecurity results from a multiplicity of factors generally associated with socioeconomic conditions, institutional weaknesses, and lack of social cohesion. Given this complexity, approaches to reducing urban crime and violence must be intersectoral and interdisciplinary in nature. While crime economists have contributed to understanding the need to address the incentives and consequences of committing crimes, specialists in public health, sociology, and criminology increasingly highlight the need to also address the risk factors that lead to criminal behavior (IDB, 2017a).

A growing number of LAC cities are experimenting with innovative, comprehensive, and evidence-based approaches to preventing and reducing crime and violence. The most promising strategies have achieved a balance between prevention and control measures to effectively reduce crime. They frequently entail improved police and intelligence effectiveness, strengthened management capacities, prioritizing prevention among the most vulnerable groups, increased community participation—including the private sector—and a strategic commitment to new technologies, including data analytics and machine-learning tools.

This report presents a number of innovative efforts that various cities have made to improve security and safety at the local level. Their efforts reveal a number of principles and practices that can be tied to positive results, such as: municipal leadership and community involvement, multisectoral crime control and prevention strategies, balanced coordination among all levels of government, access to resources, a commitment to the generation and analysis of statistics and evidence, smart use of new technologies, and the implementation of monitoring and oversight mechanisms.

The first section presents an overview of the situation of crime and violence in LAC and its cities. Section Two reviews some of the factors commonly associated with urban crime. The third section highlights actual experiences of urban crime control and prevention, and the final section synthesizes lessons learned and best practices for effective management of citizen security at the local level.
Although LAC has made socio-economic progress over the last decade, the incidence of crime remains high. Between 2004 and 2014, most countries experienced annual rates of economic growth close to 4 percent, poverty rates declined, and the health and education levels of LAC citizens improved. In contrast, the main indicators concerning crime, victimization, and perceptions of insecurity remained high, with citizens exhibiting a low level of confidence in the institutions responsible for delivering citizen security services.

LAC remains the most violent region on the planet, with a 2017 homicide rate of 22 per 100,000 inhabitants (four times higher than the global average). The region accounts for 39 percent of homicides worldwide, though it has only 9 percent of the global population (see Figure 1). Similarly, when external causes of death (homicides, suicides, and traffic accidents) are compared, LAC is the only region where homicide is the main cause of death at 52 percent (WHO, 2014). The proportion of homicidal violence occurring in LAC increased from 29 percent in 2000 to 37 percent in 2009 and 39 percent in 2017. The region as a whole has registered more than 2.5 million homicides since 2000, roughly
75 percent of which are firearm related, a figure much higher than the global average of 50 percent.\(^1\) If all else remains the same, the regional homicide rate is expected to grow from 22 per 100,000 in 2017 to around 35 per 100,000 by 2030.

There is considerable heterogeneity and concentration of crime and violence. One of the characteristics of the phenomenon of crime and violence is the degree of geographical concentration. In some countries, for example, less than 10 percent of municipalities account for almost half of all homicides, as is the case in Central America (IDB, 2017c). At a more disaggregated level, crime is concentrated in micro-spaces commonly known as street segments.\(^2\) A study analyzing five LAC cities found that 50 percent of crimes were concentrated in 3–7.5 percent of street segments, with 25 percent of crimes occurring in 0.5–2.9 percent of street segments (IDB, 2016a).

Insecurity is particularly acute in the region’s cities. Cities in LAC are among the most violent in the world. Urban homicide rates vary widely compared with the global average of 7.2 (Vilalta, Castillo, and Torres, 2016). Several cities fall below the average, while there are also cities with rates that are 10 to 20 times higher than the world average. For example, the murder rate in cities such as Caracas, San Pedro Sula, San Salvador, and Acapulco is in excess of 80 per 100,000 inhabitants (see Figure 2). It is worth emphasizing that not all capital cities exhibit the highest numbers and/or rates of homicides. Smaller cities or rural areas can be the focus of violence, particularly when close to borders, in areas with limited government presence, or in areas where drug trafficking occurs.

\(^1\) See the Small Arms Survey and UNODC.

\(^2\) A street segment is defined as both sides of a street between two intersections.
OvErVIew Of CrIMINALITY IN CItIES

Homicide is not the only type of violence in LAC cities. In 2014, the robbery rate in LAC averaged 321.7 per 100,000 inhabitants, compared with a global rate of approximately 108 (UNODC, 2016). Six out of every 10 robberies in the region are violent (UNDP, 2014). Comparing the LAC subregions, the rate was 334.1 in Central America, 126.3 in the Caribbean, 339.5 in the Andean countries, and 482.8 in the Southern Cone. It should be noted that administrative data (reports) from police sources for these types of crimes are usually subject to a high degree of underreporting. Cell phone theft has grown rapidly in Latin America in recent years. In Colombia, for example, 1 million devices are estimated to have been stolen in 2013—2,700 per day—yet only 18,000 thefts were reported. In Argentina, the number of devices stolen stands at 6,500 per day (GSMA, 2015), affecting 3 million users since 2015, according to official figures.

Violence is highest in poor urban neighborhoods and on the outskirts of cities. Crime and violence in LAC’s cities are of a complex and multidimensional nature, affecting citizens in both public places and their own homes. Several types of violence are at play: political, gang-related, economic, gender-based, interpersonal, and domestic. Another characteristic of violence in LAC’s cities is the disparity in levels and types of violence depending on neighborhoods’ income levels. Neighborhoods with higher levels of income are affected mainly by property crime (Gaviria and Pagés, 2002), while violent crime is generally focused in poor urban neighborhoods. Living in safer neighborhoods also reduces the likelihood of victimization by approximately 50 percent compared with living in

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3 See Briceño-León and Zubillaga (2002).
an “unsafe” area (Chioda, 2017). This reinforces feelings of inequality in terms of opportunities and available resources with which to protect oneself against crime, as well as access to security services such as policing and justice (Di Tella, Edwards, and Schargrodsky, 2010).

**Crime is costly and represents an obstacle to sustainable development in the region.** These high levels of crime lead to multiple distortions in public and private resource allocation and affect citizens’ well-being. Accordingly, insecurity has been recognized as one of the main challenges to the competitiveness of businesses in the region (WEF, 2012). According to the IDB’s most recent study, crime is estimated to cost countries in the region an average of 3.5 percent of GDP. For the region as a whole, this is equivalent to US$170 billion at 2014 exchange rates, or US$261 billion adjusted for purchasing power parity. These estimates include public spending on security (police, justice, and prison administration services), private sector spending on security, and the social costs of crime (due to victimization and the lost income of prisoners). Analysis of the LAC subregions shows that Central America suffers the highest costs from crime, at 4.22 percent of GDP, followed by the Caribbean (3.72 percent), the Andean region (3.08 percent), and, lastly, the Southern Cone (3.00 percent). The cost of crime for countries in the region is equivalent to annual spending on infrastructure, and is approximately equal to the annual income of the poorest 30 percent of the region’s population.
FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CRIMINALITY

LAC faces a paradox. Although the region has achieved higher levels of development, this has not coincided with reductions in crime and violence. The precise relationship between poverty and homicide is still a mystery. In LAC, compared to the rest of the world, poverty rates are relatively low, while violence levels are high (IDB, 2015). The same is true when comparing homicide rates with GDP (see Figure 3); for countries in other regions of the world, similar GDP levels mean much lower homicide rates. In this sense, the region is an anomaly.

The evolution of violent crime in relation to the overall development of a country or city is not linear. It has been observed that crime increases as per capita income rises, and then it declines once higher levels of per capita income are reached. That is, violence is lower in countries and cities with the lowest or highest levels of economic development (Chioda, 2017).

As income in a country grows, there are greater benefits and opportunities for committing crimes. At the same time, at least at first, the probability of catching and punishing criminals decreases, as investments in the criminal justice system lag, reducing the expected costs of committing a crime (“crime pays”) (Chioda, 2017).
Another driver commonly associated with violence is inequality. Although there is mixed evidence about the relationship between the two, studies have found that inequality at the local level is a strong predictor of violence. For instance, low-income youth who grow up in higher-income neighborhoods are more likely to engage in criminal activity (Chioda, 2017).

The causes of crime and violence are complex. Studies and analyses have led to the identification of some common factors that are present in places with high levels of crime and violence. Possible related causes in the region will now be examined.

**Rapid and unregulated urbanization.** LAC cities continue to grow in an unregulated manner, with little provision for public services and weak and obsolete planning strategies. After more than 50 years of urban growth, the region shows an unsustainable pattern of urbanization, as much for the high level of land use as the high level of social exclusion. In the cities of LAC, zones of exclusion are quickly established, segmenting higher-income communities from lower-income ones (Dammert, 2007; Muggah, 2015b). These spatially segregated areas can inhibit physical and social connectivity with the rest of the city, resulting in a vacuum of state presence where organized crime groups and gangs typically put in place alternative mechanisms of social control (Briceño-León, Villaveces, and Concha-Eastman, 2008; Concha-Eastman, 1994, 2005).

**Stalled productivity in cities.** The 200 largest cities in LAC generate more than 65 percent of regional economic growth. Yet despite being engines of productivity, many large and medium-sized urban centers are experiencing stalling growth after a period of intense urbanization and inadequate management. With notable exceptions, most cities are not generating enough high-productivity jobs to employ expanding labor forces, and as a result informal economic activity is soaring. This leads to a vicious cycle of worsened quality of life, increased criminal activity, lack of investment in infrastructure, and the subsequent difficulties of urban centers to attract...
investment and generate well-paying jobs (IDB, 2016b).

**Youth unemployment** is particularly problematic for citizen security. In the region, 7.1 million youth are unemployed. There are also 15.1 million youth who classify as so-called “NiNiNis” (they neither work, nor study, nor are looking to do so); they amount to 22 percent of the population in this age group (IDB, 2016c). Over half of those who actually do work are tied to the informal economy. Evidence has shown that a 1 percent increase in youth unemployment leads to an additional 0.34 homicides per 100,000 people (Chioda, 2017).

These conditions worsen when coupled with dire socioeconomic circumstances in youths’ homes, which increase the risk of social problems associated with risky behaviors such as crime and violence, among others. Although employment is an important protective factor against criminality, it’s not enough in and of itself. IDB penitentiary surveys in five countries in the region have shown that the majority of people who are imprisoned had a job when they committed the crime. Similarly, a micro-study in Brazil and Mexico found that the quality of the job (or its informality and insecurity) is an important factor when it comes to preventing criminal behavior (Chioda, 2017).

**Limited response of security and justice institutions.** Among the limitations are low institutional legitimacy and uneven capacity. In LAC, just 20 of every 100 murders result in a conviction, while the global rate is 43 in 100. As a result, in the last 20 years (1995-2015) the survey Latinobarómetro has found that people in the region have little faith in the police: less than 40 percent of citizens surveyed trust the police or the judicial system. Similarly, LAC has the highest levels of underreporting, reaching 90 percent in some cases. According to a recent survey in the main LAC cities, only 45 percent of crimes are reported, usually due to a lack of trust in the ability of police to solve the problem as well as a lack of confidence in the police as an institution (IDB, 2017b).

It is also worth noting that the production, trafficking, and distribution of drugs in LAC can explain at least to some extent the increase in violence in recent years. Several studies about the relationship between illegal markets and violence have demonstrated that the recent increase in drug trafficking has generated a significant increase in levels of violence, mostly derived from confrontations between cartels (Castillo, Mejia, and Restrepo, 2013).
AC cities have become laboratories for innovative approaches to preventing and reducing crime. Cities—and in particular their mayors—are becoming more recognized as key actors for promoting security, and they are assuming an increasingly central role in shaping policies for citizen security. Although urban security interventions differ in their scope and scale, they share a number of common features shaping their success. This section will analyze several cases of cities with a clear commitment to citizen security.

**Urban Renewal of the Aguascalientes Green Line for Crime Prevention**

Aguascalientes, a city of roughly 886,000 residents (in 2017), is the economic center of Mexico and one of its larger metropolitan areas. Although recognized as one of the country’s wealthier cities with a high quality of life, it is nevertheless dotted with areas of concentrated poverty and rising crime. Inspired by similar innovations in Curitiba,4 in 2010 the mayor explored a strategy to

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recover deteriorating areas of the city (then with a population of 804,000). The focus was on recovering a neglected 12-kilometer zone with a population of roughly 300,000 people. The strategy involved a combination of strengthening urban governance, encouraging the use of public space, promoting community participation, and implementing sustainable and multipurpose measures to promote public security and local development.

Essentially, the municipal government assumed a lead role in designing and implementing what became known as Linea Verde (Green Line) in an area that had been inaccessible due to the presence of gas pipelines as well as drug-related violence. The US$40 million intervention was divided into a series of smaller parcels in order to more rapidly access funding from federal, state, city, and private agencies. For example, the National Sports Federation provided US$10 million for bicycle lanes, running trails, sports parks, and a public pool. The Ministry for Communications and Transport granted US$7.5 million for La Linea Verde Avenue. The national petroleum company, Pemex, made an in-kind contribution of US$1.1 million worth of gas. The mayor also created a US$400,000 trust fund for continued administration of the park and programs. The national government covered roughly 80 percent while just 17 percent came out of the city budget.

The Linea Verde program appears to be delivering results on the citizen security front. According to the municipality, violent assault and robbery have declined by 50 percent since the campaign was launched. Meanwhile, the Linea Verde has increased property values by as much as 20 percent since the intervention was undertaken. There are also signs that the intervention improved overall quality of life through improvements in services and the greening of the urban environment. It is believed that the Linea Verde initiative could be replicated elsewhere in Mexico, and the program was recently awarded the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation.

Montevideo’s Problem-Oriented Policing Strategies (2016–Present)

Montevideo, with 1.3 million people, is not typically associated with crime and victimization. Yet faced with rising concerns over street crime, youth violence, and domestic abuse, public authorities there have launched a series of innovative crime prevention strategies over the years. Many of these have combined both deterrence and community outreach, and a balance between control and prevention. The country has a long history of initiating innovative crime prevention strategies extending back to the 1990s. The latest—an integrated local management program for citizen security (2012–2015) and a new problem-oriented policing and community intervention initiative (2016–present)—are particularly interesting.

Faced with rising violent crime between 2005 and 2010, Montevideo authorities, with the support of the IDB, initiated the

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5 Pemex also sees value in the project because the program’s park rangers protect pipelines.
Programa de Gestión Integrada Local de Seguridad Ciudadana (Integrated Local Management Program for Citizen Security) as a pilot in 2012. The focus of the US$7 million project was on suppressing crime and strengthening social cohesion in three specific neighborhoods (or police precincts) exhibiting high rates of crime. The pilot included the training of 750 police officers in improved investigatory and community policing techniques. Funding was also allocated to improve the national police academy’s technological infrastructure, with the construction of three new police units and the dissemination of a new police code of ethics.

Alongside measures to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of local policing, investments were made in prevention programs focused primarily on at-risk youth. As part of the pilot, local authorities identified 680 young offenders to be the focus of their attention. Specific measures included efforts to improve the quality of the social support networks on the ground, strengthen statistics collection and evaluations of existing activities, improve human resource management through a program for civil servants involved in violence prevention, and support specific strategies around drug dependency to help young people get off the street.

Based on the results of the pilot, these efforts were scaled up in April 2016 with support from IDB’s Programa Integral de Seguridad Ciudadana (Integrated Program for Citizen Security). At the center of the new US$8 million initiative is a problem-oriented policing initiative that is designed to improve operational and strategic policing at the neighborhood level. The scope of the strategy is impressive and involves the introduction of operational and human resource reforms including the training of some 1,100 police officers in problem-oriented policing (POP). This project is also designed to help support the continual reduction in robberies that has been achieved by a “hot spot” strategy in Montevideo called the Programa de Alta Dedicación Operativa (PADO). In particular, this program focuses on further strengthening crime analysis and investigation techniques through training and software improvements.

Alongside PADO are large-scale investments in reducing youth violence and domestic abuse. Started in 2015 and 2016, the Pelota al Medio a la Esperanza program includes a range of activities designed to promote coexistence and mitigate the risks of crime and violence. These include efforts to encourage school retention, promote employment schemes for former inmates, create safer urban spaces, launch recreational events, reduce domestic partner violence, and promote micro-level projects in the most problematic neighborhoods. The overall goal is to help promote social cohesion and improve efficacy to diminish the risk of interpersonal and domestic partner victimization.

The PADO initiative is already credited with making an impact on reducing violent

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10 The US$6 million IDB loan is for a 25-year term, with a 5.5-year grace period, at a LIBOR-based interest rate. It includes an additional US$2 million in local counterpart funds.
11 See the Programa Integral de Seguridad Ciudadana de Uruguay (IDB).
12 See the Programa Integral de Seguridad Ciudadana de Uruguay (IDB).
crime. Indeed, a 2017 study by the IDB and the Uruguayan Ministry of the Interior found significant initial impacts. The study examined the period from April 2016 to January 2017. When compared to a similar period in 2015, it found a 22 percent decline in robbery in areas where the initiative was deployed. In some areas, robbery dropped by more than 60 percent.

**Peñalolen’s Community Plan for Citizen Security**

Peñalolen, a mid-sized city of 248,000 nestled in the capital region of Santiago de Chile, has faced moderate levels of crime and victimization compared to other cities in the region. Yet following a surge in criminality in the early 2000s, calls emerged for a crackdown. Crime control was typically the responsibility of the national police, the Carabineros. Faced with growing pressure to address the issue, the mayor of Peñalolen launched a citizen security strategy in 2004. The so-called Plan Comunal de Seguridad Ciudadana (Communal Plan for Citizen Security) featured a regulatory and institutional mandate and a robust strategy. To be sure, it was developed in such a way that it was aligned with the pre-existing Política Nacional de Seguridad Pública (National Policy on Public Security) to ensure a high level of coordination between central and local authorities. The plan also included specific provisions to establish a municipal directorate for citizen security with a high degree of autonomy to coordinate activities, make decisions, recruit and train a team, and manage the budget. The consolidation of authority and discretion at the municipal level was essential to its overall impact.

From the beginning, the plan supported local approaches to prevent crime not only through law enforcement but a wide array of social, economic, and physical measures. Strategies ranged from discrete measures such as community policing, community alarms, and smart lighting to broader environmental design interventions to deter crime and promote social cohesion. The plan also led to the creation of early crime detection teams, parenting programs, activities to anticipate school drop-out, after-school programs, and reintegration programs.

The plan stressed the importance of focusing activities on “hot spots.” Geographically, this meant concentrating measures in five neighborhoods that generated disproportionate levels of crime and victimization in Peñalolen. To promote early warning and deterrence, the mayor introduced a protection system of community alarms reaching some 17,000 households. Meanwhile, social prevention projects focusing on at-risk youth and former offenders were also launched. An SOS women’s initiative was introduced that combined panic buttons and emergency response services to help address domestic abuse and sexual violence.

At the center of the plan was a focus on rebuilding social cohesion to restore social efficacy within the hardest-hit areas. As such, the plan stressed the role of promoting community development in areas experiencing above-average rates of crime and engaging citizens in the design,

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14 See https://publications.iadb.org/handle/11319/8858?locale-attribute=es&.

15 The country’s constitutional law on municipalities authorizes many local authorities to support and promote citizen security measures within their jurisdiction. See http://cesc.uchile.cl/buenaspracticasenprevencion/bbp_docs/12_plan_integral_barrios_seguros_chile.pdf.
implementation, and evaluation of a wide range of measures. What is more, the plan continuously adjusted to meet changing conditions on the ground, including adding an outreach strategy to address “perceptions” of crime that continued to increase even as real crime rates declined.¹⁶

The municipality has also invested in monitoring the outcomes of the plan. The directorate tracks official crime data from the police and the prosecutor’s office and conducts periodic victimization surveys.¹⁷ The results are impressive. The introduction of community safety committees and community alarms is correlated with a sharp decline in reported victimization between 2007 and 2010.¹⁸ Reported victimization declined from 33 percent to 22 percent and reported violent robberies plummeted from 23.9 percent to 9.9 percent from 2011 to 2014.

A Coordinated National and Local Effort in Honduras’s Central District and San Pedro Sula

In 2011, Honduras was considered the most violent country in the world, with the world’s highest homicide rate at 86 per 100,000 inhabitants. The country’s structural challenges including macroeconomic shifts, poverty, and political instability along with the presence of gangs, transnational criminal groups, and complex drug-trafficking routes made tackling crime and violence a challenging feat. As in other countries, crime—particularly gang violence—was concentrated in the cities, in both the Central District and San Pedro Sula alike. The high levels of violence in turn generated low levels of trust in public institutions, with more than 80 percent of the population reporting zero or little trust in the national police.

This situation gave way to the Política Nacional Integral de Convivencia y Seguridad Ciudadana de Honduras (National Comprehensive Policy for Coexistence and Citizen Security). This policy’s key starting point to reduce violence in general, and urban violence in particular, was strengthening security and justice institutions. This included a deep reform of the national police, focused on training and professionalization. Both the IDB and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) supported a project that helped transform the Honduran police. In the past, police cadets could enter the police ranks after completing six years of basic education; now, they are required to complete 12 years of studies. Previously, patrol officers graduated with less than six months of training; now, they need 11 months, including an internship in the field.

The police salary was increased by more than 40 percent and social security benefits, as well as infrastructure and equipment for academic training, greatly improved. Likewise, there was greater participation of civil society in the design of security reforms through the creation of a commission in charge of reforming the Honduras police.

This reform at the institutional and national level was coupled with efforts at the local level. The policy emphasized the responsibilities of local governments

in delivering citizen security. Doing so often starts by generating better data to understand local criminal dynamics. With IDB and SDC support, there was a great advance in the generation and analysis of information to study violence and crime at a micro level. To support local governments in the data collection process, 30 Observatorios de Convivencia y Seguridad Ciudadana (Observatories of Coexistence and Citizen Security) were installed and are operating in the municipalities with the highest rates of crime, including the Central District and San Pedro Sula. The information from the observatories is gathered in a server in the Ministry of Security and is validated three or four times a week by a committee whose members represent the primary data sources, such as the public prosecution service, the police department of investigation, or the Institute of Forensic Medicine, among others.

These analyses have enabled the design of data-driven citizen security programs. For instance, a study that analyzed the association between homicide rates and domestic violence, other sociodemographic characteristics such as the urban index of marginalization, and geographical variables found that the marginalization index, the divorce rate, and the amount of space connectivity are positively associated with homicides in the Central District. This kind of information was key for the design of an urban intervention that the Honduras government is about to implement with the support of the IDB. The new project seeks to prevent and reduce homicides and domestic violence, the latter being largely an invisible crime that mainly affects women, youth, and children. This will be addressed with a comprehensive approach through the provision of citizen services by various state institutions, violence prevention programs, and the improvement of the urban habitat at the local level.

To date, this combination of efforts at the national and local levels has paid off. The homicide rate decreased by 50 percent in six years, from 86 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2011 to 43 in 2017. Perceptions of security and levels of trust in institutions have also increased. According to the Gallup global survey, the percentage of citizens who claim to feel safe walking in their neighborhoods increased by 11 percentage points from 2015 to 2016, and citizens’ trust in the police increased from 19 percent in 2015 to 54 percent in 2017.

Ciudad Juárez’s Holistic Approach to Crime Control

Ciudad Juárez, a sprawling city of 1.3 million, experienced a dramatic surge in criminal violence from 2008 to 2011. The absolute number of homicides garnered global headlines, increasing by more than 700 percent from 192 (2008) to 1,589 (2009) to 3,766 (2010), reaching a homicide rate of 271 per 100,000. Extreme levels of violent crime effectively shut down the city: an estimated 37,000 businesses closed and a quarter of the population fled to the United States and other parts of Mexico. A number of factors shaped Ciudad Juárez’s vulnerability to crime and victimization. Nevertheless, a series of

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19 The primary trigger was a conflict between erstwhile business partners—the Sinaloa and Juárez cartels—who were battling over drug routes. They were joined by hundreds of street gangs in the city. Other structural factors also contributed to a comparatively high risk of criminal violence, including high levels of single-head households, chronic social disorganization, and a weak and compromised police force and criminal justice sector.
protests in 2008 and 2009 set the stage for change.20

Conceived by municipal and federal partners, the Todos Somos Juárez (We Are All Juárez) program was formally launched in 2010. The US$400 million initiative drew inspiration from the experience of Medellín, bringing in support from civil society and the private sector. The sheer scope and scale of the intervention is unparalleled in Mexico, however. More than 160 separate commitments were set out to mitigate risks and promote opportunities to prevent violent crime. These were organized around six core sectors: public security, economic growth, employment, health, education, and social development. The entire program was informed by an assessment and led by a multi-stakeholder coordinating team, the Mesa de Seguridad.21

The program was spread out across different levels of government, the private sector, and civil society. This was an important part of its implementation. One of the goals was to shift the focus of programming away from a narrow reliance on the armed forces and punitive law enforcement to an approach emphasizing social and economic prevention strategies. Todo Somos Juárez required a massive investment in urban renewal schemes (schools, universities, and parks) as well as increasing harm reduction and poverty reduction and improving access to credit and loan schemes for tens of thousands of families. The program involved specially created citizen councils to shape priorities, programs, and projects. Moreover, federal agencies were required to work closely with state and municipal counterparts, with weekly reports being sent to the president’s office.

While far from problem free, Todo Somos Juárez achieved many of its intended outcomes. The homicide rate dropped from 271 to 19 per 100,000 between 2010 and 2015. Other metrics of violent crime also plummeted, though these changes were also likely influenced by the (temporary) victory of the Sinaloa cartel over the Juárez cartel. Rates of school performance also increased dramatically, and more people walked in streets that had previously been deserted. Even so, criticisms also emerged about incomplete projects, the rushed nature of the intervention, and unmet expectations. There are also concerns that rates of violence have surged anew in recent years, raising questions about the overall impacts of the initiative.

There are worthwhile questions about the extent to which Todo Somos Juárez is replicable within Mexico and beyond. The sheer scale and cost of the initiative ensures that it is not readily adaptable to lower- or medium-income settings. Yet the initiative did generate a series of worthwhile lessons, not least the critical emphasis on comprehensive intersectoral strategies, the role of institutional bodies to coordinate multiple layers of government and citizen groups, the value of strong involvement of the private sector, and a persistent emphasis on results. The program has inspired similar Mesas de

20 The state and municipal authorities routinely protested against the national government’s decision to deploy roughly 10,000 soldiers and federal police, some of whom were purportedly connected to criminal activity in the city. Civil society–led marches also rallied public attention within Mexico and around the world. The turning point, however, was the assassination of a group of students in early 2010 and the (reluctant) engagement of the president.

21 The Mesa included officials from all three levels of government; representatives of the security forces including the army, federal police, and municipal police; and the attorney general’s office together with a range of civil-society stakeholders. See http://www.mesadeseguridad.org/.
Seguridad in Mexico as well as possible pilot programs in Nuevo Laredo and Tamaulipas.

**Kingston and Port of Spain’s Community-Based Interventions**

In several Caribbean countries, violent crime rates have increased significantly over the last two decades. Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago reached some of the highest homicides rates in the world, peaking in Jamaica in 2009 (61.5 per 100,000 inhabitants) and Trinidad and Tobago in 2008 (41.6). In high-crime urban areas of both countries, tolerance to the use of violence to exert control and resolve interpersonal and community disputes has become a social norm reinforced by gang presence, family dynamics, and the weakness of legitimate security and justice entities (IDB, 2017b). Long-term exposure to high levels of violence has generated distrust, fear, and deep social fragmentation.

The Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP) in Jamaica and the Citizen Security Programme (CSP) in Trinidad and Tobago have been implemented by the countries’ respective Ministries of National Security with the support of the IDB. They use similar interventions focused on risk factors at the individual, family, and community levels in high-crime, predominantly urban, marginalized neighborhoods. Violence interruption programs have been implemented in communities affected by gang confrontations, using a model similar to that of Cure Violence (Chicago). Finally, in Trinidad and Tobago there is an additional component to strengthen police relations with the community, while in Jamaica there is a focus on expanding community justice services (legal aid, restorative justice, and mediation).

Some of the keys to success in both programs are concentrating interventions in specific high-crime neighborhoods, focusing on violence prevention and not just repression, and recognizing local diversity and therefore the diverse needs in different communities that has led to offering different actions at the community level according to local needs. There has also been a focus on building social cohesion in these neighborhoods and investing in monitoring and evaluation.

Indicators of positive changes in the targeted communities, according to program reports, suggest there has been progress. In the case of Kingston, Jamaica, the murder rate in the eight parishes in which the CSJP has operated declined 43 percent from 2009 to 2013 compared to 35 percent nationally, and 44 percent of CSJP community residents responded that crime in their community has decreased in the past five years, compared to only 27.5 percent of residents from other communities. In Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, murders in the CSP communities dropped by 55 percent from 2008 to 2014, compared with a national reduction of 26 percent for the same period. Injuries and shootings in CSP communities dropped by 40 percent between 2008 and 2013, compared with a national reduction of 12 percent for the same period.

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22 Implementation began in Jamaica in 2001 and has been in phase III since 2015. In Trinidad and Tobago implementation began in 2008 and continues to the present.

23 Peace Management Initiative (PMI) in Jamaica and Project REASON in Trinidad and Tobago.


Bogotá: Innovative Citizen Security

During the 1980s and 1990s Bogotá was considered a violent and dangerous city with complex criminal dynamics. Yet within a decade, the capital’s homicide rate dropped from 80 per 100,000 (1993) to 22 per 100,000 (2004). Today it is closer to 14 per 100,000 (2017). The transformation was not only a function of structural changes in politics, social life, or the economy, but also the result of deliberate strategies launched by a succession of mayors. The leadership and determination exhibited by these mayors are key factors in the city’s rebirth.

A focus of mayors throughout the 1990s and 2000s was on building a “civilized” culture of self- and mutual respect. While Bogotá has witnessed numerous citizen security initiatives, arguably the most innovative period was from 1995 to 2003. During this time approximately US$160 million was channeled toward citizen security measures. According to the World Bank, roughly 72 percent of that sum was allocated for police programs and 20 percent was devoted to so-called coexistence programs and projects. While a sizeable amount, these expenditures represented roughly 2.33 percent of the city’s budget. Bogotá also received a US$10 million loan from IDB in 1998–2004 and raised roughly US$6 million in local funds as part of this support.

The Misión Bogotá program was arguably one of the most comprehensive approaches to citizen security ever undertaken in the city. The initiative combined community policing and coexistence programs with the creation of so-called “spaces of order.” Between 1996 and 2001 roughly 6,600 community councils were created in Bogotá to work block by block with the metropolitan police. The mayor also recruited almost 4,000 civic guides to regulate citizen activities in the areas of traffic, security, waste, and community mobilization. These activities were complemented with 12 “safe zones” to intentionally reclaim dilapidated and dangerous areas.

A major focus of Bogotá’s mayors was strengthening and working with the metropolitan police. In addition to investing in police management and training, a community policing program was launched in 1999 with support from the Chamber of Commerce. The so-called Plan Cuadrantes program focused on proactive patrolling in “hot spots” and directly incorporated the community councils, generating a strong buy-in from city residents. Parallel strategies focused on amplifying “family police stations” to address domestic violence, introducing mediation and reconciliation units to address everyday community tensions, and creating a citizen security and coexistence unit to maintain continuity.26

Over the years Bogotá has continued to renew and reinvent its approach to public safety and security. A large-scale urban renewal program started in 2016 in El Bronx, described locally as “the hell in the heart of Bogotá,” involved a major transformation in housing and infrastructure and also generated security dividends as well as criticism.27 Another set of innovative measures includes the “casas de justicia”

that provide local legal services as well as the Centros de Atención Móvil para Dro-godependientes (CAMADA, Mobile Attention Centers for Drug Addicts). Meanwhile, the Programa de Protocolo de Preven-ción de Homicidios (Homicide Prevention Protocol)—a special hotline to extract would-be victims of lethal violence—has also generated some positive impacts since it was launched in 2017 (Otis, 2018).

These are far from the only innovative citizen security measures introduced by cities. For example, the Barrio Seguro program in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) is credited with rebuilding trust in crime-affected neighborhoods and reducing murder rates. It has been successfully replicated and the program has scaled from 2 to 13 neighborhoods since it was launched (Muggah et al., 2016). Likewise, the Fico Vico program in Belo Horizonte (Brazil) is also credited with reducing crime rates through focused deterrence and social programs in the hardest-hit areas of the municipality (Muggah et al., 2016). Efforts to improve citizen security in Quito (Ecuador), including modernizing the police and linking citizens with police through mobile phones, are also credited with improving perceptions of security and reducing crime (O’Boyle, 2018). Although the examples vary, there are key lessons emerging from successful city-based citizen security programs.
A recent mapping of innovative citizen security measures detected a large number of approaches in cities across LAC.28 Around one-third (322) of the roughly 1,100 measures identified were at the city level, with a particular focus on the prevention of common crime and youth crime. The majority of the interventions also included a strong component of community participation.

These initiatives are generating more evidence of what works and what does not (Abt and Winship, 2016; Muggah et al., 2016). Until recently, there were few repositories of information cataloguing positive outcomes that could be a guide for the region (IDB, 2015).29 There are now more platforms that systematize and contribute to the distribution of knowledge, such as the Diálogo Regional de Políticas a Nivel de Ministros de Seguridad de ALC y la Clínica de Conocimiento, both organized by the IDB. Along the same lines is the Alizana de Municipales para la Prevencion de la Violencia en Centroamérica y la República Dominicana (AMUPREV).30 Likewise, impact evaluations are becoming more common in order to close gaps

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28 See https://citizensecurity.igarape.org.br/.
30 See http://www.amuprev.org/historias/.
in knowledge in LAC cities (IDB, 2015), including gaps in matters of innovation (Berk-Seligson et al., 2014; Abt and Winship, 2016) in Central America as well as LAC as a whole.

There is no doubt that local governments are best positioned to respond to the demands of citizens, including calls for better security. Local governments have a granular understanding of the threats their citizens face. However, there are a number of things that local governments must do in order to make their efforts effective: balance complex processes to coordinate across different levels, build strategic alliances, and have the necessary technical and administrative skills along with adequate resources.

All the knowledge emerging from cities contributes to identifying the essential elements for the successful local management of citizen security.

1. **Sustained municipal leadership is fundamental to successful public security.** The key ingredient in effective urban citizen security programs is capable, creative, and courageous local management, especially on the part of the mayor’s office. Mayors and local governments are the ones who best understand their local context and challenges, and who can promote a move towards greater citizen security. Without strong direction and the involvement of local champions from the private sector and civil society, it is difficult to generate the necessary momentum to deliver positive outcomes.

2. **Different contexts generate different responses.** There is no single formula to reduce urban criminality. When it comes to organized crime, there may be more involvement of federal-level institutions and intelligence-led operations. With respect to street crime and domestic violence, the strategies tend to be more balanced, combining deterrence and prevention. Any city strategy must be informed not just by a master plan, but also analysis of real-time data to allow for highly granular targeting as well as adjustments and course correction throughout the initiative.

3. Across virtually all settings, however, there is a common array of risk factors giving rise to crime and victimization. **Getting ahead of crime and addressing these risk factors is fundamental.** Indeed, in most contexts access to and abuse of alcohol is overwhelmingly correlated with crime and victimization. Likewise, availability of firearms and the abundance of drug-trafficking networks exacerbate criminal violence. What is more, sustained exposure to domestic and interpersonal violence is also a factor that influences future violence, in terms of both victimization and perpetration. When resources are limited, local strategies must be selective in their approaches, and addressing these risk factors in a focused way from the outset can be cost-effective.
Urban crime prevention requires intersectoral, coordinated, and balanced strategies with a vision for citizen security. To effectively prevent crime, it is necessary to identify the risk factors (economic, social, institutional, or structural) associated with criminal behavior. As such, local responses to crime must be comprehensive, and to achieve this it is necessary to incorporate a priority for urban security in the local development agenda. This involves aligning the actions of various local offices towards one goal: reducing crime and violence. This requires coordination among different levels of government and among various social services including health, education, and employment. At the same time, it is key to achieve a balance between crime control and crime prevention, which requires coordinated action not just with the police but also with other critical local and national public and private figures. The demands of maintaining a common vision and agenda are challenging and require a high degree of coordination, leadership, and specialized human capital.

Creative and strategic financing is critical. City authorities must identify creative measures to generate additional financing that allows them to begin and sustain their initiatives. They will also almost certainly be required to develop multi-stakeholder arrangements and public-private partnerships to raise capital. Some cities are also experimenting with blended finances, special municipal taxes, social impact bonds, targeted subsidies, and incentives for private investment, among other measures.

Technology and real-time data analysis are critical in guiding city-level citizen security. In most cities of the region technology is already facilitating the collection and analysis of data on crime as well as criminal investigations. High-quality and granular information on crime, perceptions of security, and underlying social and economic factors is essential to all aspects of the programming cycle. Without such information, city leaders cannot adequately design, implement, monitor, or evaluate security interventions. The advent of powerful computer processing, big data (Alvarado, 2017), machine-learning tools, and AI means that the quality of data collection and analysis has improved and the costs have declined. But these tools also generate new challenges: developing human capacity to effectively use technology, creating alliances with the private sector to leverage big data and other technologies, and ensuring appropriate and ethical protocols for data collection, storage, retention, and privacy.

It is crucial to engage communities in the design, implementation, evaluation, and communication of citizen security strategies. All successful interventions reveal that the process matters. Specifically, the way in which citizens are involved in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of strategies is critical. To ensure the sustainability of any initiative, affected communities need to feel that they are owners of the process. Citizen security measures that involve key stakeholders in the preparation of diagnostics and action plans, and that regularly provide evidence of results, are likely to outlast those that do not. These steps are central to building confidence in authorities and institutions.

Ensuring that investments in citizen security are rigorously monitored and evaluated is essential. Too often, monitoring and evaluation are left until the end of a citizen security process. Or they are relegated to the bottom of the priority list, considered an optional add-on. And yet without proper monitoring and evaluation, it is hard to reach basic conclusions about the cost-effectiveness of specific interventions. Fortunately, a culture of evidence is beginning to spread in the citizen security sector. Data-driven interventions are increasingly the norm, particularly with the advent of big data tools to process public perception as well as real results on the ground. Finally, investment in high-quality impact evaluation is essential to identify successes and failures, carry out course corrections during the project, and scale interventions when they show positive results.

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|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Homicide | 42  | 69  | 60  | 115 | 206 | 326 | 300 | 260 | 265 | 154 | 241 | 254 | 283 | 208 | 197 | 223 | 228 | 192 | 1,589| 2,399| 3,766| 2,282| 850 | 614 | 594 | 440 | 680 | 642 |
| Extortion|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Rape     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Injuries |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Robbery  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Homicide rate | 5.32| 8.34| 6.93| 12.67| 21.67| 32.74| 29.09| 24.34| 23.95| 13.44| 20.30| 21.01| 22.98| 16.58| 15.42| 17.14| 17.47| 14.67| 121.03| 182.18| 273.27| 165.13| 61.13| 43.85| 42.09| 30.92| 47.36| 44.31|
| Extortion rate | 7.96| 8.63| 4.71| 0.14| 0.00| 0.49| 0.48|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Rape rate | 19.83| 25.82| 24.71| 23.81| 32.60| 29.04| 32.51|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Injuries rate | 63.82| 80.26| 104.21| 125.21| 130.76| 110.60| 128.38|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Robbery rate | 383.23| 177.63| 84.64| 56.55| 45.18| 49.80| 53.97|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

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Source: https://www.policia.gov.co/revista-criminalidad/
|       | 90  | 91  | 92  | 93  | 94  | 95  | 96  | 97  | 98  | 99  | 00  | 01  | 02  | 03  | 04  | 05  | 06  | 07  | 08  | 09  | 10  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Homicide | 83  | 87  | 74  | 102 | 124 | 92  | 102 | 124 | 110 | 106 | 104 | 109 | 124 | 86  | 88  | 90  | 85  | 104 | 110 | 110 | 163 | 153 | 173 | 147 | 161 |
| Robbery | 7,188 | 7,719 | 8,650 | 9,314 | 9,327 | 10,180 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Homicide rate | 6.16 | 6.43 | 5.45 | 7.48 | 9.05 | 6.68 | 7.38 | 8.93 | 7.89 | 7.58 | 7.45 | 7.84 | 8.98 | 6.28 | 6.45 | 0.00 | 6.59 | 6.24 | 7.64 | 8.06 | 8.02 | 12.36 | 11.60 | 12.81 | 10.57 | 11.65 |
| Injuries rate | 333.16 | 330.36 | 311.59 | 201.80 | 198.35 | 216.21 | 199.13 | 195.72 | 174.20 | 303.25 | 217.99 | 184.17 | 184.83 | 197.58 | 362.39 | | | | | | | | |
| Robbery rate | 524.31 | 560.32 | 627.44 | 675.14 | 675.66 | 737.03 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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Source: http://reportescomunales.bcn.cl/2015/index.php/Pe%C3%B1alol%C3%A9n.


Frühling, H. 2012. La eficacia de las políticas públicas de seguridad ciudadana en América Latina y el Caribe: Como


