



Sector and Thematic Evaluation

# Evaluation of IDB Support in the Area of Citizen Security in the Region

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# Abbreviations

<b>CISAJ</b>	Centers of the Justice Administration System
<b>CM</b>	<i>Ciudad Mujer</i>
<b>CS</b>	Citizen Security
<b>DEM</b>	Development Effectiveness Matrix
<b>EU</b>	Executing Units
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based Violence
<b>GDI</b>	Gender and Diversity Division
<b>ICS</b>	Innovation in Citizen Services Division
<b>IDB</b>	Inter-American Development Bank
<b>IFD</b>	Institutions for Development Sector
<b>LAC</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>OVE</b>	Office of Evaluation and Oversight
<b>PCR</b>	Project Completion Report
<b>RJ</b>	Restorative Justice
<b>SAJ</b>	Justice Administration System
<b>SFD</b>	Sector Framework Document
<b>SO</b>	Specific Objectives
<b>TC</b>	Technical Cooperation
<b>VAW</b>	Violence Against Women



# Executive Summary

With 8% of the world's population and 34% of global homicides, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is the most violent region in the world. The region has a homicide rate three times higher than the global average, with notable regional variations: Central America has the highest rates, while Brazil and Mexico are home to some of the cities with the highest homicide rates globally. The crime phenomenon in LAC is persistent, affecting especially young men, who are both victims and perpetrators of violence. Rates of domestic violence and violence against women are also high. Violence and insecurity in LAC have high economic, social, and institutional costs, representing, on average, 3.5% of regional GDP. Public spending on security is almost double that of developed economies, and insecurity affects competitiveness, raising the costs of doing business and reducing business productivity. These problems also erode confidence in institutions responsible for the rule of law, weakening social cohesion and democratic processes, with a high percentage of citizens distrusting the judiciary and the police.

The objective of this evaluation is to analyze the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the results of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) program in Citizen Security (CS). The IDB's work in CS is guided primarily by the 2012 conceptual framework and the Sector Framework documents (SFD) of 2014, 2017, and 2023. These documents prioritize five areas of intervention: (i) social and situational prevention, (ii) police professionalization, (iii) criminal justice, (iv) the penitentiary and rehabilitation system, and (v) governance. This evaluation analyzes (a) the relevance of the IDB's CS interventions, that is, the alignment of operations with the needs and priorities of governments, and the IDB's strategic pillars for the sector, as well as the alignment of the design of operations with empirical evidence and the realities and context of the countries; (b) the effectiveness of operations, measured in terms of the achievement of the results expected in the projects by area of intervention; and (c) the sustainability of the results achieved.

The portfolio of operations under analysis comprises 50 operations approved between 2009 and 2023 for US\$3,129 million. The portfolio includes 41 investment loans, 9 associated investment grants. Each analysis dimension is performed for a different set of operations depending on the availability of information and methodology. The



relevance analysis was performed for 39 investment operations (loans and grants) because three were canceled, and the other eight were non-reimbursable investment grants complementary to loan operations. The effectiveness analysis of CS operations (general analysis) is based on eight closed and validated investment operations (approved between 2009 and 2014); while the effectiveness analysis by area of intervention and the sustainability analysis are performed for the eight operations analyzed under the general analysis, plus three operations that were originated in other sectors and that have at least one specific CS objective and two operations closed but not validated by OVE (for a total of 13 operations, approved between 2009 and 2016).

The evaluation faced some limitations that restricted its scope. First, since the effectiveness analysis only collected information from 8 closed projects (approved between 2009 and 2014) for the overall analysis and 13 for the analysis by intervention (approved between 2009 and 2016), it is not possible to generalize the results to the entire portfolio. Second, even though 207 technical cooperation (TC) operations were approved during the period, it was not possible to report results on them because the systems only reported progress at the product level and not results, and no interviews were conducted on these operations. Finally, no final beneficiaries were interviewed because the work was carried out without field visits. To address these limitations, OVE triangulated the portfolio analysis with evidence provided by the literature and with interviews with IDB specialists and government counterparts. To mitigate the limitation of the lack of field visits and interviews with beneficiaries, for some projects audiovisual material provided by the counterparts was reviewed, which included interviews with final beneficiaries and images of the infrastructure works. The information limitations on the TCs were not mitigated.

Most of the Bank's operations were relevant; they served countries with the highest rates of violence, promoted a gender approach and attention to vulnerable groups, and, for the most part, were aligned with the strategic priorities of the countries and IDB's pillars for the sector. The Bank provided financing for citizen security in the countries with the highest rates of violence in the region, such as Honduras, Jamaica, and Brazil, although with some exceptions, such as El Salvador, Trinidad and Tobago, and Mexico. In 92% of the operations, their objectives were aligned with the national priorities reflected in the National Development Plans through, for example, support for police and penitentiary reforms, strengthening of criminal statistics, and violence prevention. In addition, 85% of the interventions had targeting criteria to serve the neediest population and promoted a gender approach and attention to vulnerable groups. In terms of strategic alignment, 62% of the operations were aligned with the strategic objectives of the sector set out in the IDB Strategies with the countries, and all operations were aligned, in accordance with

the IDB's comprehensive approach, to one or more of the five areas of intervention of the SFDs, with a particular emphasis on the area of social prevention.

All investment projects in the portfolio were informed by findings from the literature, and the majority (29 out of 39) adequately reflected local realities and had an appropriate vertical logic. The Bank used evidence from the literature to inform the design of all its interventions, for example, in the designs of violence prevention programs focused on the development of socio-emotional skills and behavioral changes and in police professionalization programs aimed at improving the analysis of crime information and improving the relationship between the police and the community. Seventy-five percent of interventions (29 out of 39) were adapted to local contexts, responding in a timely and flexible manner to political-administrative changes. However, in a quarter of the portfolio, contextualization problems were observed, such as contracts that did not fit the legal framework or planning incompatible with local capacities. Regarding the vertical logic of operations, a quarter of the projects (10 out of 39) defined very ambitious objectives or activities that were not proportional to the expected objectives. For example, some operations aimed to reduce the homicide rate at the national level through social prevention activities in family or localized community settings, which, on their own, had low feasibility to have a significant effect, at least in the short term. Weaknesses in the vertical logic were more frequent for older projects in the portfolio (approved between 2009 and 2024), OVE found that the most recently approved projects have more robust designs.

The Bank has played an important role in generating and disseminating knowledge on the effectiveness of CS interventions. The IDB developed a repository that systematizes empirical evidence from more than 40 international sources on CS interventions and serves as a reference for policymakers to design CS programs and strategies. In addition, during the period, the Bank doubled the production of publications and financed victimization surveys in Argentina and Panama. The sector has generated relevant lines of research (such as in hot spot surveillance, positive parenting, prison management and the cost of crime) that have informed the design of new operations and technical dialogue with countries in the region. However, the division does not have a formal research agenda that prioritizes areas of knowledge based on knowledge gaps. The Bank also promoted the importance of evaluation within the design of operations; however, once the projects closed, few were carried out.

All 33 loans with more than 50% disbursement reported at least one implementation problem, and more than half of the loans (21 of 33) had implementation delays. Median execution times of the CS portfolio were longer (69 months) than the Bank's (63 months). The main

execution challenge (66%, 22 projects) was limitations in the capacities of the Executing Units, including the lack of inter-institutional coordination between security and finance ministries, police, and local governments. Given the Bank's comprehensive approach to the sector, the designs of 65% of the operations (24 of 39 projects) covered several priority areas within the same project, which often generated significant complexities in their execution and coordination. To mitigate these challenges, the loans were accompanied by technical cooperation that financed products aimed at supporting execution through, for example, training, development of monitoring systems, and institutional strengthening plans, among others. The second challenge (42%, 14 projects) was political-administrative changes, such as electoral cycles and leadership changes in the countries. The third challenge (30%, 10 projects) was the lack of consideration, in the design, of enabling elements for execution or of adjusting the design to the realities of the country, for example, the lack of consideration of the absence of basic infrastructure for the implementation of the program such as technological equipment. Additionally, delays, limited quality, and cancellations by construction companies and consultants were found (30%, 10 projects). Finally, the pandemic impacted the execution of 43% of the 22 projects that were active between 2020 and 2021; however, OVE found that the IDB's active supervision allowed them to be adjusted and their implementation to continue.

The effectiveness of the closed portfolio is low: of the eight closed loans, seven could not demonstrate the achievement of their objectives. Seven of the eight closed projects had negative effectiveness ratings (the achievement of the result indicators for more than 50% of the specific objectives (SO) was not achieved or could not be demonstrated). The vertical logic limitations identified in the relevance analysis for the old projects (2009-2014) are one of the factors explaining the low effectiveness rating. Of the seven projects with a negative rating, five had problems related to the ambitious definition of objectives and/or financed activities not aligned with the objectives. For example, in Peru, the aim was to reduce the recidivism rate of juvenile offenders at the national level through activities implemented in 6 juvenile centers, so it was not feasible to expect that these activities would affect the national recidivism rate. Another factor identified was the weaknesses in the result matrices in six (out of seven) projects that compromised the ability to measure their effectiveness. These include a poor definition of indicators to measure progress towards objectives, including indicators that failed to fully measure objectives, whose results could be affected by external factors, or that were considered as outputs rather than results (for example, the launch of a crime observatory to measure achievement of an objective to improve spending efficiency in the

sector), and the difficulty in monitoring progress in a timely manner, due to a lack of information collection or a lack of consideration for the frequency with which this information is collected.

Although most projects did not demonstrate achievement of their overall objectives, OVE identified important contributions of the Bank's program in several areas. OVE analyzed results at the intervention area level for 13 operations based on indicators considered appropriate to measure progress by area. The results identified by intervention area are detailed below, which, as mentioned above, cannot be generalized to the entire portfolio given the limited number of operations.

**Social prevention:** Programs in this area implemented socio-educational models focused on vulnerable populations (mainly youth and children) through the construction of community centers, the provision of training for parents on positive parenting, activities for the resolution of community conflicts, values training in schools, psychological therapy for victims, among others. These programs managed to reduce risk factors and violent behavior (Jamaica, Belize, Costa Rica), and in one case, decreased criminal activity (Brazil), although in this case, there is no evidence of attribution. Other programs in this area focused on inserting at-risk youth into the labor market through training and entrepreneurship programs in partnership with the private sector, with positive results in El Salvador but mixed in Jamaica. Two programs sought to reduce violence against women by building and launching women's city centers that provide care and assistance services to women victims of violence in El Salvador and Honduras. In El Salvador, the program was found to have increased the percentage of female victims who sought help and assistance from centers and other institutions. In Honduras, a reduction in the percentage of female beneficiaries who experienced violence was reported.

**Police professionalization:** Operations in Honduras, Costa Rica, and Uruguay implemented programs for strategic planning, police management and training, development of information systems, implementation of police delegations, strengthening of the community policing model, training in criminal investigation and analysis, and strengthening of technological infrastructure. These programs led to improvements in citizens' perception of the police institution and reported reductions in crime in Honduras and (with causal evidence) in Uruguay. In addition, strengthening local criminal investigation capacities, implementing information platforms for crime analysis, and police prediction tools made it possible to increase the quality of crime information in Honduras and the quality of crime analysis carried out by the national police in Uruguay.

**Criminal Justice:** In Peru, coverage of justice services was increased through the construction of justice centers, but the expected results were not achieved in terms of the interoperability of the systems that sought to interconnect the entities of the administration of justice system (SAJ) to reduce judicial overload and improve the productivity and efficiency of the service. Finally, given the high levels of pretrial detention in the region, the programs in Jamaica, Guyana, and the Bahamas promoted the expansion of the offer of alternative mechanisms to prison and the restorative justice approach. In Jamaica, community justice courts were built, and training activities for judicial authorities and awareness-raising for communities on the restorative justice (RJ) policy were implemented, which achieved an increase in the number of RJ cases in which an agreement is reached between perpetrators and victims. There is no information on results for Guyana and the Bahamas.

**Penitentiary system and rehabilitation.** The rehabilitation and social reintegration programs implemented in Belize, Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Peru, based on comprehensive care models for prisoners (through the provision of psychological therapy, business design and job training), showed improvements in the range of services available to the beneficiary population, and in some cases (Belize, El Salvador and Uruguay) contributed to the reduction of recidivism rates, although mechanisms that made their robust measurement feasible were not always included (Costa Rica).

**Sector governance.** Programs in governance focused on strengthening the capacity of governing bodies to design evidence-based public security policies through actions to improve the quality and availability of information systems, with limited results. The IDB contributed to strengthening governance through regional dialogue initiatives and capacity building financed mainly through technical cooperation projects that have shown high levels of participation and satisfaction among clients.

The availability of financial and human resources for infrastructure maintenance, as well as the institutionalization, legitimization, and appropriation of the programs by the institutions and the final beneficiaries, contributed to the sustainability of most of the results in the 13 closed projects. Two factors helped to ensure the sustainability of the results of the interventions: on the one hand, the availability of financial and human resources for the maintenance of infrastructure works and to give continuity to the offer of services created through the programs; in some cases (Uruguay and Bolivia) the youth service centers were transferred and/or absorbed by a public entity to ensure their sustainability. On the other hand, the institutionalization, legitimization, and social appropriation of the programs by the institutions and the final beneficiaries, for example, the youth and women's care centers financed by the IDB programs in El Salvador,

Costa Rica, and Jamaica, managed to create their own demand and the mechanisms of social appropriation contributed to guarantee their sustainability. In contrast, changes in the institutions' priorities and problems of inter-institutional coordination negatively affected the sustainability of the partial results of some programs. For example, changes in authorities and institutional priorities in some countries (Peru and Brazil) affected the sustainability of some program results. Likewise, issues of inter-institutional coordination became a constant challenge for the sustainability of CS interventions in Argentina, El Salvador, and Peru, despite the establishment of inter-institutional coordination bodies during project design and implementation.

To strengthen IDB's capacity to respond to the needs of the countries, OVE proposes the following recommendations:

1. Strengthen the design of operations by: (i) defining objectives aligned and proportional to the proposed activities to ensure a plausible attribution of results to operations; (ii) strengthening project results frameworks by identifying indicators aligned with the objectives, whose frequency corresponds to the planned implementation period of the operation and that allow to measure the effectiveness of the interventions.
2. Support the implementation of operations by (i) strengthening the institutional capacities of the executing units involved in project execution, through a tool that allows the identification, monitoring, and mitigation of the characteristic risks of the sector, such as the lack of inter-institutional coordination, and (ii) documenting and evaluating the strategic use of the support for the strengthening of the executing units (for example, TC resources), and generating lessons learned about their effectiveness that can be used in new operations.
3. Promote the generation of strategic knowledge to enable the identification and replication of interventions that reduce violence and crime, increasing the security of citizens. This includes:
  - a. Focus on generating evidence (empirical or resulting from triangulation of evaluations with quantitative and qualitative methods) on the effectiveness and potential for replication and scaling up of the interventions supported by the portfolio, and where possible, collaborate with other institutions (research centers, universities, other development banks) to develop knowledge in the identified areas. In addition, systematize the knowledge products generated through TCs so that they can be used strategically by the division.

- b. Deepen knowledge on coordination schemes to make comprehensive interventions (that support more than one area of intervention) more effective.
- c. Develop a document containing a strategic prioritization of the sector's lines of research in accordance with the region's knowledge gaps in order to guide the IDB's work for the next years and enhance its role as a key knowledge partner.



# 01

## Introduction



## **A. Background, objective, and scope of the evaluation**

- 1.1. The evaluation updates the previous work of the Office of Evaluation and Oversight (OVE) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on Citizen Security (CS) in the region, providing evidence on the performance of the program. OVE conducted two previous evaluations of CS. The first one, in 2010 (document [RE-378](#)), identified deficiencies in the evaluability and theoretical framework that supported the IDB's interventions in the sector, recommending a general restructuring of the program. The second included an interim report in 2013 (document [RE-456](#)) on implementation challenges and a final report in 2014 (document [RE-455-1](#)) on the relevance of the IDB's positioning in the sector. In these last two reports, OVE recognized the relevance and appropriateness of approaching the CS program from a preventive perspective and identified challenges related to the breadth and complexity of the interventions, the active oversight of the portfolio in execution, the identification and mitigation of risks, and the need for a focused knowledge agenda. Neither of the previous evaluations analyzed the effectiveness or sustainability of the interventions (the Annex summarizes the main findings, recommendations, and follow-up in their implementation).
- 1.2. The objective of this evaluation is to analyze the CS program in three dimensions: (a) the relevance of the supported operations, (b) the achievement of the expected results, and (c) the sustainability of the results achieved. OVE's latest CS evaluation recognized the relevance of the IDB's strategic approach in this sector. While new forms of crime have emerged and others have evolved in magnitude and complexity in the region, the overall challenges in CS have remained stable. The Bank's strategic orientation has therefore maintained the general lines of action. For this reason, this evaluation does not assess strategic relevance, but rather the relevance of CS operations, their results, and the sustainability of the results (Table 1.1; the complete evaluation matrix can be found in document [RE-560](#)).

**Table 1.1. Evaluative Questions**

Relevance of CS operations
1. Were the CS operations aligned with the IDB Group's corporate priorities and strategies and empirical evidence in the sector, as well as with the needs and challenges of each country?
Results of CS operations
2. What were the results of the portfolio in the different areas of intervention? 3. What were the main factors that affected the implementation of operations and the achievement of results?
Sustainability of CS's results of operations
4. How sustainable are the results of loan operations, and what are the main success factors or obstacles affecting this sustainability?

Source: OVE.

- 1.3. To guide the analysis of this evaluation, OVE developed a reference framework based on the IDB's documents (Figure 1.1). Citizen security policies aim to attack the multiplicity of causes and risk factors associated with crime and violence. In practice, citizen security encompasses a series of activities aimed at preventing and reducing violence, promoting public safety and access to justice, strengthening social cohesion, and reinforcing mutual rights and obligations between the State and citizens. The IDB's strategic documents, guided mainly by the 2012 conceptual framework and the Sector Frameworks documents (SFDs) of 2014, 2017, and 2023,<sup>1</sup> prioritize five areas of intervention: (i) social and situational prevention, (ii) the professionalization of the police, (iii) criminal justice, (iv) the prison system and rehabilitation, and (v) governance.

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<sup>1</sup> Documents [IDB-DP-232](#), [GN-2771-3](#), [GN-2771-7](#) and [GN-2771-12](#). In addition, in 2024, the IDB approved the SF to support populations affected by situations of fragility, conflict and criminal violence (document [GN-3199-2](#)), which includes a focus on criminal governance.

**Figure 1.1**

**Reference framework  
for evaluating IDB  
support in the CS area**

Source: : OVE, with information on the Conceptual Framework of the Citizen Security Sector (document [IDB-DP-232](#)), Sector Framework for Citizen Security and Justice 2014 (document [GN-2771-3](#)), 2017 (document [GN-2771-7](#)), and 2023 (document [GN-2771-12](#)).



Note: <sup>(a)</sup> evidence-based care models specific to the level of risk of the population being treated. <sup>(b)</sup> integrated information management and crime analysis systems, with protocols and trained personnel; <sup>(c)</sup> uniform and periodic collection of information.

1.4. The evaluation period covered 2009 to 2023. Two criteria were used to define the period: (i) having a sufficient number of closed operations with self-evaluations (Project Completion Reports, PCR) validated by OVE to analyze their effectiveness and sustainability; (ii) having models of interventions that were developed with a basis in operational guidelines for projects in the CS area (2009) and the conceptual framework defined in 2012. The evaluation used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Table 1.2 summarizes the methods,

scope, and sources of information for responding to evaluative questions (document [RE-560](#) includes the methodological detail of the evaluation).

**Table 1.2. Methods, Scope, and Sources of Information**

Criteria	Question	Method	Scope	Source of information
<b>Relevance</b>	Were the CS operations aligned with the IDB Group's corporate priorities and strategies, empirical evidence in the sector, and the needs and challenges of each country?	Desk review Literature review Portfolio analysis (39 investment operations)	Alignment of CS activities with the strategies of the IDB Group, relevant literature in the sector, and the needs of each country	IDB strategic documents in the sector (Sector Frameworks, operational guidelines) Bank Strategies with the Country National Development Plans or CS documents for each country Project documents: loan proposals Relevant literature on the sector
		Semi-structured interviews		Sector specialists, team leaders, counterparties, and executing agencies Head of Division (IFD/ISC), CSJ Cluster Leader
<b>Effectiveness</b>	What were the results of the portfolio in the different areas of intervention?	a. Overall effectiveness analysis (8 operations)	Identification of results for closed loans that have PCR and/or validation as of June 2024	Loan documents: biannual progress monitoring reports (PMR), Project completion reports (PCR), independent validation of PCR, and impact evaluation
		b. Effectiveness analysis by area of intervention (13 operations)		
	What were the main factors that affected the implementation of operations and the achievement of results?	Portfolio analysis	Identifying common factors that affected the implementation of operations	Loan documents: loan proposals and TCs, biannual progress monitoring reports (PMR), Project completion reports (PCR), independent validation of PCR
		Semi-structured interviews		Sector specialists, team leaders, counterparties, and executing agencies
<b>Sustainability</b>	How sustainable are the results of loan operations and what are the main success factors or obstacles affecting this sustainability?	Portfolio analysis (13 operations)	Identifying constraints on the continuity of results	Loan documents: loan proposals, biannual progress monitoring reports (PMR), Project completion reports (PCR), independent validation of PCR

Source: OVE.

1.5. The portfolio of operations under analysis comprises 50 operations. The portfolio includes 41 investment loans and 9 associated investment grants (the complete list is in the Annex). Each dimension of analysis is performed for a different set of

operations depending on the availability of information and methodology. The relevance analysis was performed for 39 investment operations (loans and grants)<sup>2</sup> approved between 2009 and 2023. The overall effectiveness analysis of operations (based on PCR validation ratings) focuses on the eight closed and validated investment operations. These operations were approved between 2009 and 2014. The effectiveness analysis by area of intervention (which reports on the achievements of the operations) and the sustainability analysis are performed for the 13 closed operations (approved between 2009 and 2016) of the portfolio with PCR, including the eight operations in the overall effectiveness analysis, plus three operations that originated in other divisions (Gender and Diversity and Housing and Urban Development), and have at least one area-specific objective and two operations that have PCR but no validation. Between 2009 and 2023, 207 technical cooperation (TC) operations were also approved. Due to limitations in the availability of information, the evaluation presents only a descriptive analysis of these operations.

- 1.6. The evaluation faced some limitations that restricted its scope. Most of the report was carried out during the pandemic, which prevented field visits (i.e., police and prison infrastructure works, training centers, recreation centers, police academies) and interviews with final beneficiaries (e.g., users of services and programs). The effectiveness analysis has strong limitations since it collects information on a reduced loan portfolio: eight closed projects for the overall effectiveness analysis and 13 closed loans for the effectiveness analysis by area of intervention, which were approved between 2009 and 2016. This prevents the generalization of results to the entire loan portfolio. Although 207 technical cooperation projects were approved during the period, no results were reported on them because the systems only reported progress at the product level and not results, and no interviews were conducted on these operations. To address these limitations, OVE sought to complement the information on investment loans from the monitoring systems with interviews with specialists, triangulating the information with the counterparts in the countries.<sup>3</sup> Robust mitigation measures were not found to address the limitation of the lack of field visits and interviews with beneficiaries. However, for some projects (Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Jamaica), audiovisual material

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<sup>2</sup> Of the 50 operations, 3 were cancelled and 8 are non-refundable investment grants complementary to loan operations (which are analyzed in conjunction with the investment loan).

<sup>3</sup> While the original evaluation proposal envisaged conducting interviews with government authorities only for completed projects, OVE conducted interviews for all loans approved before 2022. However, due to time and resource limitations, OVE was unable to conduct interviews for the TC and the desktop review of administrative information on results was very limited, so OVE decided not to include it in this report.

provided by the counterparts was reviewed. This included interviews with final beneficiaries and images of infrastructure works (training centers, recreation centers, and prisons).

- 1.7. This evaluation is organized into five chapters. After this introduction, Chapter II briefly describes the region's CS context that motivates the IDB's intervention in this area. Chapter III analyzes the program's relevance, and Chapter IV presents implementation issues, the main results, and the factors that guarantee its sustainability. Finally, Chapter VI summarizes OVE's main findings and recommendations for the IDB Group.

## **B. Context and IDB's Support to CS**

- 1.8. With 8% of the world's population and 34% of global homicides, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is the most violent region in the world. The region has a homicide rate three times higher than the global average according to data from 2022 (19.6 vs. 5.6 per 100,000 inhabitants according to [UNODC, 2024a](#) (Figure 1.2). The region is home to 22 of the 25 countries with the highest homicide rates in the world<sup>4</sup> and eight of the ten countries<sup>4</sup> with the highest rates of physical aggression in 2022 ([UNODC, 2024b](#)). In addition, in LAC, 50% of homicides are associated with organized crime or gangs, compared to 22% worldwide, and more than 60% of homicides are carried out with firearms ([UNODC, 2023a](#); [2023b](#)).<sup>5</sup> The influence of organized crime, supported mainly by drug trafficking, is also observed in crimes such as human trafficking, illicit exploitation of natural resources, forced displacement, robbery, physical assault, extortion, and kidnapping (Garzón and Alvarado, 2022). The region also has high levels of non-lethal violence such as human trafficking, sexual violence, theft, and excessive use of police force ([UNODC, 2022](#)). Although the problems and magnitude differ by country, crime has been posed as a challenge to the development and democratic quality of the region.

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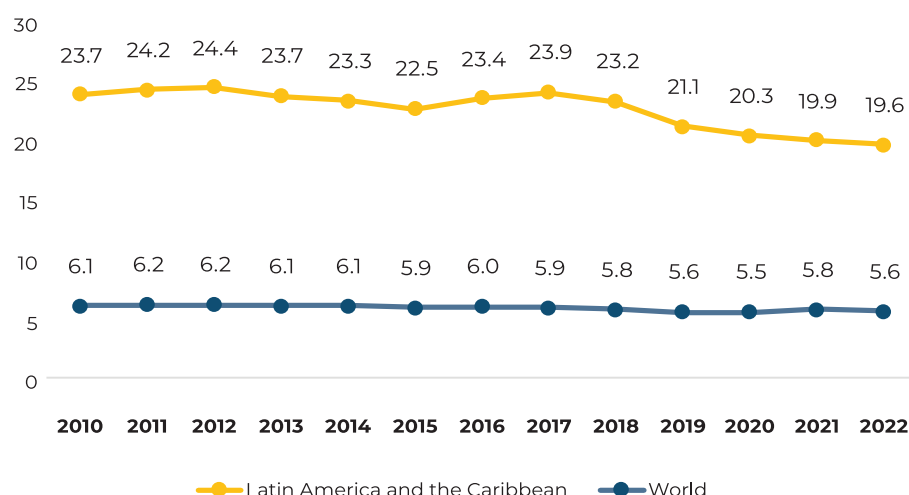
4 In 2022, Bahamas, Honduras, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago were among the countries with the highest homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants (hpcmh), with rates greater than 30 hpcmh ([UNODC, 2024a](#)). The region is home to 42 of the 50 cities with the highest homicide rates in the world.

5 According to the Global Organized Crime Index report, Colombia is the second highest-scoring country in the world, followed by Mexico, and Paraguay (Global Initiative Against Organized Crime, 2023).

**Figure 1.2**

**Intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants\***

Source: OVE, based on data from [UNODC, 2024a](#).



\* UNODC (2023a) defines intentional homicide as unlawful death inflicted on a person with intent to cause death or serious injury.

- 1.9. Regional figures hide the heterogeneity of violence in subregions and countries. Central America has been the subregion with the highest homicide rates since 2015 (on average 26 per 100,000 inhabitants compared to 18 in South America and 14 in the Caribbean, UNODC, 2023a), although, in recent years, some countries in South America and the Caribbean have experienced a significant increase in criminal activities ([UNODC, 2024a](#)). However, regional figures are heterogeneous: the homicide rate in Honduras in 2021 (38.24 per 100,000 inhabitants) is almost double that of its neighbor, Guatemala (19.99 per 100,000 inhabitants), and that of Uruguay (8.93 per 100,000 inhabitants) is almost double that of Argentina (4.62 per 100,000 inhabitants) ([UNODC, 2024a](#)).
- 1.10. Crime in the region shows high levels of persistence and geographical concentration. All else being equal, on average in LAC, one additional homicide in a given year predicts 0.66 additional homicides the following year at the regional level. Persistence is not only a characteristic at the national level, but it is also observed in statistics at the subnational level and is valid for different types of crimes ([Chioda, 2016](#)). Another distinguishing feature of crime and violence in the region is their degree of geographical concentration. A study from 42 cities in six LAC countries found that 50% of all crime was concentrated in 2.5% of street segments ([Chainey et al., 2019](#)).
- 1.11. The type of violence that occurs in LAC predominantly affects young men; however, the rates of violence against women are also high. Young men (between 15 and 29 years old) in LAC are the group most likely to be both perpetrators and victims of violence. These represent 91% of homicide victims, in part, because of their presence and participation in gangs, and their recruitment by



organized crime groups ([UNODC, 2023b](#)). Young women tend to be victims of different types of violence, i.e., human trafficking, forced prostitution, abuse, and femicide (InSight Crime, 2014). The rates of domestic violence and violence against women in the region are also high.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the region's migration dynamics, influenced by the intensification of gang violence (for example, in Central America) and political instability (as in Venezuela), have made migrants in LAC vulnerable to a series of crimes closely related to their condition, especially human trafficking and extortion.

- 1.12. Violence and insecurity have high institutional, economic, and social costs. The direct cost of crime in LAC represents, on average, 3.5% of regional GDP, with differences between countries.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the percentage of public spending related to crime is almost double the average of developed economies (Jaitman et al., 2017). Crime also inhibits competitiveness and increases the cost of doing business. World Bank surveys ([n.d.](#)) indicate that 26.2% of businesses in Latin America and the Caribbean consider crime and theft a serious barrier to conducting business, and 22% have experienced losses due to theft or vandalism. According to a World Bank study ([Ferreira and Robert, 2018](#)), companies' security expenditures have a significant negative correlation with their productivity. Finally, the perception of a lack of security and high levels of crime weaken trust in the institutions responsible for the rule of law, eroding social cohesion and democratic processes (Figure 1.3 and 1.4). According to the latest Latinobarómetro survey, 69% and 60% [sic] of the region's citizens considered having little or no trust in the judiciary branch and the police, respectively ([2023](#)) (Figure 1.5). Trust in institutions plays a fundamental role in the demand for public policies.<sup>8</sup> A functioning justice system is essential to maintaining the rule of law and respecting fundamental guarantees, but obstacles such as the cost and slowness of criminal procedure reform processes continue to hinder effective access to justice (IDB, 2018a).

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6 In 2019, the LAC Gender Equality Observatory of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reported that the countries in the region with the highest rate of femicide per 100,000 women are: Honduras (6.2), Saint Lucia (4.4), El Salvador (3.3), and Trinidad and Tobago (2.9). According to the same source, in the region, 1 out of every 3 women married or in a free union is a victim of domestic violence.

7 Most security spending (42%) is dedicated to the response (mainly from the police), followed by private spending (37%), and social costs (21%) (Jaitman et al, 2017).

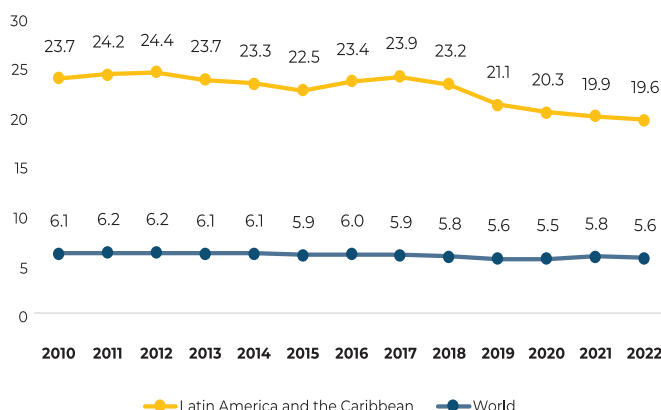
8 The lack of trust undermines the implementation of effective public policies. People who don't trust the police are unlikely to support an increase in their budget. Citizens doubt that an increase in resources will improve their abilities to fight crime and would prefer to invest money in defending themselves (Cafferata, 2021).



**Figure 1.3**

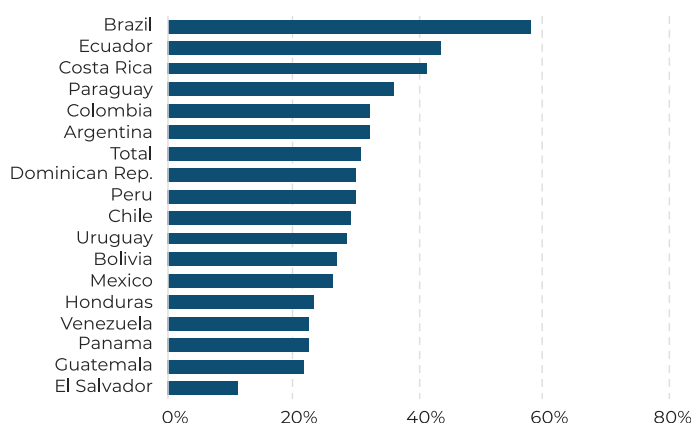
**Main problem of the region according to the perception of citizens 2004-2023**

Source: OVE, based on data from [Latinobarómetro 2023](#).

**Figure 1.4**

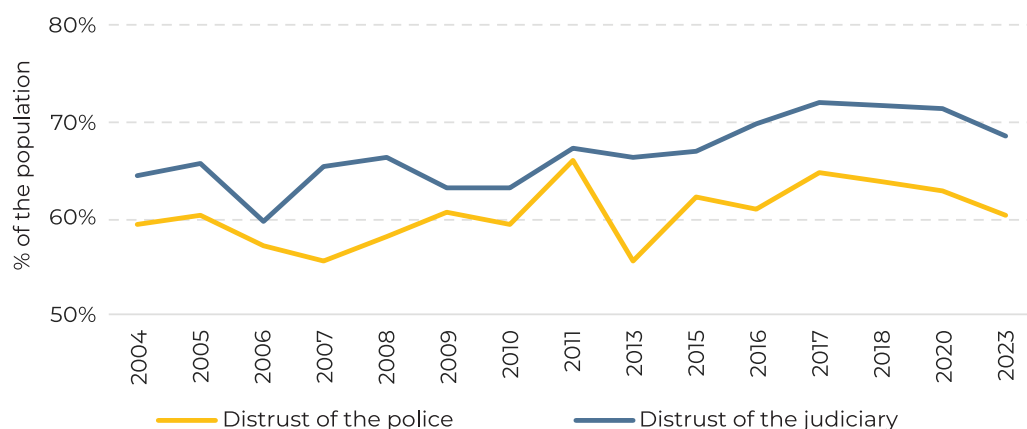
**Population concerned about being the victim of a violent crime in 2023**

Source: OVE, based on data from [Latinobarómetro 2023](#).

**Figure 1.5**

**Distrust of institutions (police and judiciary branch) 2004-2023\***

Source: OVE, based on data from [Latinobarómetro 2023](#).



\* Figure 1.5 adds the percentages of those people who answered to have little or no trust in the judiciary and in the police or police officers.

*Nota:* Figures 1.3 and 1.5 include information only for the years in which the Latinobarómetro survey was conducted. There are no data available for the years 2012, 2014, 2019, 2021 and 2022, since the survey was not conducted in those years. The countries considered by Latinobarómetro are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

1.13. Security models in the region are varied, with comprehensive and preventive approaches in some countries and more reactive and repressive in nature in others. In the last decade, several countries in the region have made progress in the implementation of comprehensive and preventive citizen

security models, focusing, among other things, on the reform of legal systems, the strengthening of social policies, and the strengthening of the capacities of security forces. Efforts such as the Peace and Reconciliation Program in Medellín (Colombia) stand out, which focuses on social policies such as promoting education and job placement, as well as the social prevention and restorative justice approaches implemented in Costa Rica. However, given the prevalence of phenomena such as drug trafficking and/or organized crime, some countries have moved towards more punitive policies against crime, which combine coercive application of the law, militarization of the police, mass arrests, and tougher penalties. These measures may entail risks of violations of human rights, constitutional guarantees, and free and fair trials.<sup>9</sup>

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9 Muggah et al (2018), and Blair and Weintraub (2021).





# 02

IDB Support  
in CS in LAC

- 2.1 IDB operations to support CS in LAC were identified based on the formulation of its development objectives. OVE identified within the universe of operations approved in the evaluation period by the State Reform, Social Investment, and Urban Development sectors, those whose development objectives included: preventing or reducing crime and violence, including gender-based violence or violence against women; reducing victimization and perpetration of violence in vulnerable populations; and strengthening security and criminal justice institutions.<sup>10</sup> The portfolio evaluated does not include operations related to the frontal fight against organized crime. While the latest sectoral frameworks recognize the phenomenon, this issue and its related criminal practices (such as drug trafficking and other illicit economies) are not part of their lines of action.
- 2.2 Between 2009 and 2023, the Bank approved 257 operations in CS totaling US\$3.196 billion, composed primarily of investment loans (in amount) and technical cooperations (in number). Investment loans accounted for 60% of the total approved amounts (US\$2.097 billion), followed by programmatic loans with 34.4% (US\$1.1 billion), investment grants with 3.5% (US\$112 million), and technical cooperations with 2.1% (US\$67 million). Technical cooperations showed a strong emphasis on client support, with 51% of total resources allocated to this area (32% for research and dissemination and 15% for operational support). In addition, technical cooperation support evidenced a notable concentration on regional programs, representing 45% of the approved amounts. On the investment grant side, these complemented loans in Costa Rica, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, and Uruguay, funded by the Grants Facility (GRF) and donors from the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the Swiss Development Agency.
- 2.3 The portfolio originated primarily in the Innovation in Citizen Services (ICS) division within the Citizen Security and Justice (CSJ) cluster. Most operations came from ICS through the CSJ cluster, representing 57% of the approved total. They are then followed by the Gender and Diversity Division (GDI) and the Labor Markets Division, both with 19% (US\$626 million and US\$600 million, respectively), and the Housing and Urban Development Division (HUD) with 5% (US\$124 million). The Migration, Social Sector, and Transportation divisions had fewer operations in the portfolio. Only in 2024 did CSJ become a sector within IDB's organizational structure. The area was mainly managed through a cluster within ICS.

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<sup>10</sup> The portfolio includes criminal justice operations and not all those approved for the justice sector in general.

- 2.4 The main investment components in the portfolio include physical and technological infrastructure, as well as institutional strengthening activities. The main investment components of the loans included financing of information systems and the adaptation of technological infrastructure (33 projects), in addition to the construction, expansion, and remodeling of infrastructure (28 projects). In the area of technological infrastructure, funding was provided to create or improve information management systems for different areas of the prison system, data center equipment to analyze criminal statistics and national systems in which to register criminals and violence. In terms of physical infrastructure, funding was provided for training centers for youth and police personnel, care centers for victims of violence and justice services, as well as socio-sports and socio-educational civic centers. Investments were also made in comprehensive care centers for incarcerated individuals, police stations, precincts, police outposts, and other government facilities, such as public defense offices. The rest of the resources were mainly allocated to strengthening institutional capacities.
- 2.5 The TC funded a wide range of products and activities that sought to support countries in designing their policies, generating information for decision-making, and promoting the exchange of knowledge and experiences. With technical cooperation resources, support was provided, for example, for the technical design and governance of police prevention and professionalization programs; training methodologies aimed at developing skills for young people to mitigate their risk factors; the development of surveys to strengthen information systems and criminal statistics (including the development of questionnaires and the application of standardized methodologies); and impact assessments were conducted in the areas of police professionalization, social prevention, and rehabilitation. The TCs also financed activities for the exchange and dissemination of good practices among countries in the region. 51% of the TCs (15% of the amount approved in TCs) supported the implementation of operations through the institutional strengthening of the executing agencies and the financing of monitoring and evaluation systems, among others. Although the Bank's monitoring and evaluation systems for TCs report on the products achieved, there is no information at the results level, in terms of, for example, how the knowledge products generated are used or to what extent the execution of operations is improved with the support of TCs.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The CS area had a dedicated multi-donor fund that financed the CS initiative between 2012 and 2016. An independent evaluation of the initiative found that operations appropriately addressed the fund's objectives, and the intended outputs were largely achieved.





# 03

Relevance of IDB  
operations in CS



- 3.1 The relevance analysis is based on the alignment of CS operations with (i) the needs and priorities of the region and countries, (ii) the areas of intervention defined in the IDB's strategic pillars for the sector,<sup>12</sup> and the design's alignment with (iii) the empirical evidence and the realities and/or context of the countries. In terms of alignment with the needs and priorities of the region, OVE reviewed the extent to which the Bank's program supported countries with the greatest challenges in the sector. In addition, OVE reviewed the extent to which operations identified and adequately addressed the needs of the sector in each country. In terms of strategic alignment, OVE reviewed whether the operations in the portfolio addressed the priorities and strategic pillars defined in the Institutional Strategies, SFDs, and Country Strategies. Finally, regarding the quality of design, OVE examined whether the activities supported by the Bank were backed by empirical evidence of their effectiveness, whether operational plans and activities were contextualized to the institutional and operational realities of the countries, and whether the activities of each project were consistent with their defined objectives. Out of the 50 operations in the evaluation portfolio (41 loans and nine investment loans), OVE analyzed the relevance dimensions of 39 operations, as three were canceled and eight were investment grants complementary to investment loans.<sup>13</sup>
- 3.2 During the evaluation period, the Bank focused its Citizen Security support on the countries of the region with the highest rates of violence, with some exceptions. To analyze the alignment of the portfolio with the region's needs, OVE compared the Bank's support (measured in terms of the number of loans) with the levels of violence in the countries (measured as the number of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants). This exercise found that the Bank approved a higher number of operations in countries with higher levels of violence, such as Brazil, Honduras, or Jamaica. In countries with violence levels below the regional median, the Bank approved 17 loan operations (or 1.1 loans per country), while in those above, it approved 26 (or 2.2 loans per country). Figure 3.1 presents a country-level scatter plot showing the relationship between levels of violence (measured as the number of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants) and the weight of Citizen Security operations in each country's operational program (measured as the proportion of funds allocated to CS

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12 As defined in the Sector Framework Documents for Citizen Security and Justice 2014 (document [GN-2771-3](#)); 2017 (document [GN-2771-7](#)); and 2023 (document [GN-2771-12](#)); operational guidelines for the sector.

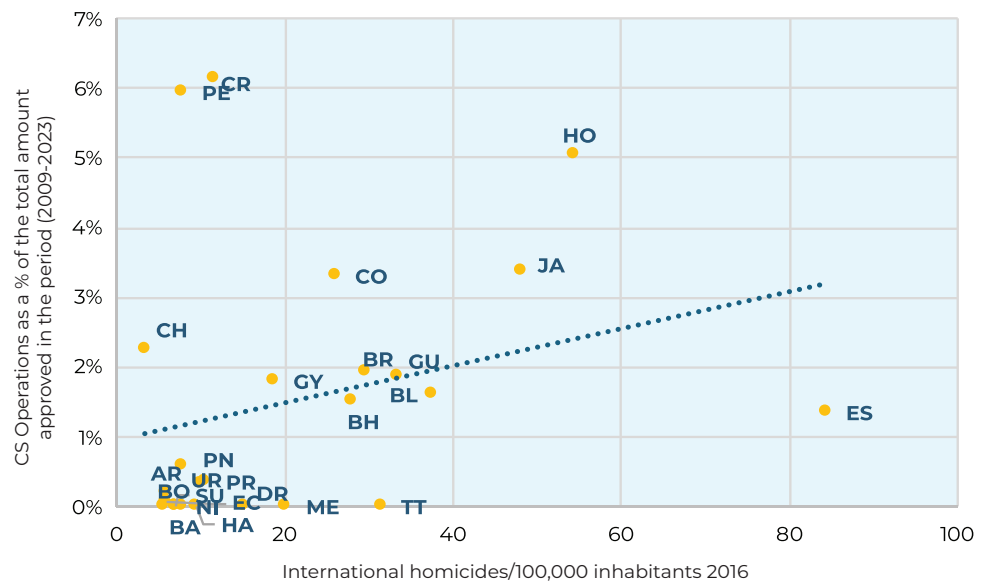
13 The operations BR-L1277, BR-L1417, and ES-L1092 were canceled and not considered in the relevance analysis. On the other hand, the non-reimbursable investment grants HO-G1244, HOG1251, HO-X1021, JA-X1003, JA-X1006, JA-X1008, CR-J0002, and UR-J0002 were not included in the analysis because they share the same specific objectives and results matrices as the related operations. Only one investment grant, which is not complementary to a loan, is included in the analysis.

interventions with respect to the total portfolio approved in the period). The trend line indicates a positive correlation between the weight of CS operations and the levels of violence.<sup>14</sup> However, it is important to highlight outliers such as Trinidad and Tobago and Mexico, which, despite having some of the highest crime rates in the region, did not receive any investment loan in the sector. This latter case is notable, as no loans were approved in the sector despite one of its CS included as an expected result the improvement in local capacity to design and implement crime prevention policies.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 3.1**

**Homicide rates and weight of IDB loans in CS by country**

Source: OVE, based on data from UNODC and Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW).



Note: The amount of CS transactions only includes INL and IGR.

3.3 At the country level, the objectives of the operations were aligned with the sector's priorities and challenges. Most operations (36 out of 39) were aligned with countries' priorities as defined in National Development Plans. Only three operations partially aligned with the country's priorities. An example of partial alignment was Paraguay, where the change of authorities between the approval of loan PR-L1077 and its execution, generated a misalignment between the areas of intervention of the project, and the priorities of the government that executed it.<sup>16</sup> This lack of ownership, along with other factors, led to the

<sup>14</sup> The findings from this analytical exercise, using the approved amount per capita (\$/inhabitant) as an alternative measure, show the same pattern.

<sup>15</sup> Although these countries did not approve investment operations, they did receive support in the form of technical cooperation. For example, Mexico received 11 technical cooperation grants for a total amount of US\$3.2 million, and TT received 4 technical cooperation grants for a total amount of US\$0.5 million.

<sup>16</sup> While the government was interested in a loan focused exclusively on institutional strengthening of the police, the program included interventions on prevention and gender violence. According to the loan cancellation note: "As a kind of "original sin" that could not be redeemed, the Program - from the beginning of its operations - did not respond to government priorities."

cancellation of 85% of the approved funds. Additionally, OVE found that most projects (85%) provided a complete (28 projects) or substantially complete (5 projects) diagnosis of the security situation in the country, region, or geographical area where the project was implemented, using available sectoral data or specific studies conducted during the design phase.

- 3.4 In line with the crime and violence characteristics of the region, most of the interventions included targeting criteria to serve the most in-need sectors and promoted a gender and vulnerability-based approach. OVE found that 85% of the interventions had specific targeting criteria (see Annex) to respond to the specific characteristics of each country, including geographical areas (states, cities, municipalities, and/or neighborhoods, communes, communities) with high violence rates, and/or a lack of services (49%), at-risk populations for violence (women, migrants, and LGBTIQ communities) (36%), and age groups with high rates of victimization (56%). In addition to the direct investments made to gender issues (Ciudad Mujer), OVE identified—with administrative information from the GDI action plans—that over half (53%) of CS's loan operations transversely addressed gender issues, with a focus on those related to violence against women.<sup>17</sup>
- 3.5 In strategic terms, IDB's work in CS has evolved in line with regional policies, with an integrated and multi-sectoral perspective. The IDB was the first multilateral bank to support the region on CS issues and the deployment of technical and financial resources positioned it as one of the main partners on CS issues in the region. The IDB's strategic approach has transitioned from only focusing on addressing the underlying causes of violence, such as poverty and inequality, to a comprehensive and multisectoral perspective. This perspective includes strengthening of police, judicial, and penitentiary systems; violence prevention focused on vulnerable groups and victims of violence; and, more recently, institutional strengthening. These areas and their corresponding lines of action are defined in the 2014, 2017, and 2023 SFD. While SFDs define lines and actions and success dimensions, they do not establish a robust theory of change for each intervention model, nor do they explore the relationships or complementarities between the different lines of action. The prevalence and deepening of certain criminal practices, such as organized crime, have recently been integrated into the Bank's institutional approach. To date, SFDs have sought to mitigate the risk factors related to criminal violence and the likelihood of vulnerable populations being co-opted by organized crime.

<sup>17</sup> Source: GN-2531-13, GN-2531-15, GN-2531-17, GN-3001-1, GN-3116-2, and GN-3116-3. Action plans consider that an operation mainstreams gender if it includes (i) an analysis of gender gaps or problems, (ii) specific activities that address these problems, and (iii) at least one gender-related indicator in the results matrix.

Starting in 2024, the Bank will implement a new, more explicit approach to combating organized crime, which includes the Support Framework for Populations Affected by Situations of Fragility, Conflict, and Criminal Violence (2024-2027) and a regional alliance aimed at fighting organized crime through three pillars: limiting its influence among vulnerable populations, strengthening state institutions, and suppressing its financial flows.<sup>18</sup> Operations in other areas of the Bank (fiscal policy, transparency, and integrity, and financial markets) will include interventions that contribute to reducing organized crime, such as those with components against money laundering or support for the identification of ultimate beneficiaries. Finally, the sector and its lines of action are relevant in the implementation of the new institutional strategy of the IDB Group (2024) which includes the area of institutional capacity, state law and citizen security as one of the seven areas of operational focus.

- 3.6 The entire CS portfolio was aligned with the intervention areas defined in IDB's strategic areas for the sector, with a particular emphasis on the *social prevention area*.<sup>19</sup> The institutional strategies defined the IDB Group priorities in CS in broad terms (i.e., promoting solid and effective institutions through the funding of CS projects in cities, seeking to contribute to the reduction of homicides), and, therefore, all operations were aligned. In addition, all operations were aligned with at least one of the priority areas defined in the SFDs.<sup>20</sup> Most of the portfolio (46% of the total approved resources) concentrated on *social prevention* interventions with an emphasis on the establishment of socio-educational centers and employment training for young people, the prevention of violence (family, domestic, and gender) at the community level, and prevention and care programs for female victims of violence. Programs aligned with the area of *police professionalization* (25% of the approved amount), funded community-based policing strategies, the modernization of police career systems, and the strengthening of criminal investigation. In the area of the penitentiary system (12%), projects funded comprehensive rehabilitation and social reintegration programs, programs to promote the use of alternative sentences, and infrastructure

18 As a result of these efforts, in October 2024 the IDB approved the first loan for Ecuador that specifically addresses the challenges of organized crime with several preventive and institutional measures.

19 OVE analyzed the alignment of operations in relation to the IDB's institutional strategies (IDB9, Corporate Results Frameworks) and the SFD's areas of intervention (Annex).

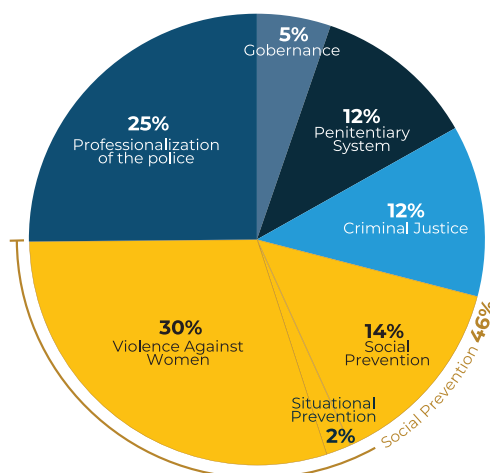
20 OVE classified the components of each of the investment loans and the CT, in accordance with the areas of intervention defined in the SFDs and the type of activities and focus of each of these (Annex). The review process was inter-subjective, involving two members of the OVE team who individually classified each project and then verified the results and reclassified by consensus. OVE triangulated this information with IDB specialists during the interviews.

and prison management programs. In *criminal justice* (12%), the Bank supported programs to digitize justice administration systems, improve quality and access to justice services, and promote restorative justice (JR) and alternative mechanisms to prison. Finally, in *governance* (5%), projects mainly supported information management systems and the strengthening of criminal investigations, strengthening capacities at a sub-national level, and, more recently, cyber security. (Figure 3.2). The TC portfolio provided the most support to the areas of governance (39%) and social prevention (37%, Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.2 (left)**

**Percentages of approved loan amounts by area of intervention**

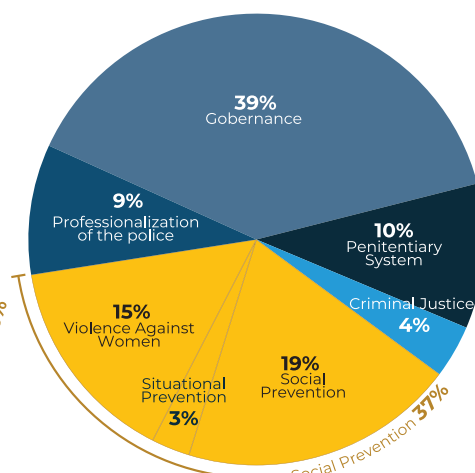
Source: OVE, based on Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) data.



**Figure 3.3 (right)**

**Percentage of CT amounts approved by area of intervention**

Source: OVE, based on Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) data.



Note: Approved amounts (loans and CT) by area of intervention as a percentage of the total amount approved 2009-2020.

3.7 Regarding strategic alignment at the country level, OVE found that the issue of CS was addressed in more than half (58%) of the Country Strategies and that the majority (90%) of the portfolio was fully or partially aligned with one of the strategic objectives defined in them. The text analysis of the 74 Country Strategies approved during the evaluation period reveals that approximately one-third included at least one CS strategic objective, while a quarter incorporated the topic as a cross-cutting or dialogue area.<sup>21</sup> 62% of operations were aligned with specific CS strategic objectives in the Country Strategies (full alignment), and 28% were aligned only with broader strategic objectives, such as the strengthening of the business environment, areas of dialogue, or cross-cutting issues (partial alignment). The remaining operations (10%) were not “prioritized” among the strategic objectives defined by Country Strategies. In some cases, the Bank held constant dialogue with governments and responded

21 OVE reviewed and classified through text analysis all the country strategies approved between 2009 and 2023, identifying those that defined strategic objectives, areas of dialogue or cross cutting areas related to issues of citizen security, including gender violence. Of the 74 strategies reviewed, 24 included strategic objectives and 17 dialogue or cross cutting areas related to CS. See Annex for a detailed list of these strategies.

to demands that arose due to an event of public insecurity or an institutional crisis and/or utilized events such as Security Week to strengthen dialogue with countries.<sup>22</sup>

3.8 All CS interventions were informed by evidence of their effectiveness. Based on the empirical evidence platform financed by the Bank, which gathers data from over 40 international sources on the degree of effectiveness of existing solutions and the literature review presented in SFDs,<sup>23</sup> OVE verified whether the type of interventions proposed in each project was supported by existing literature, if the evidence indicated that such interventions were effective, and to what extent said evidence was specific to the region or similar contexts. The results show that all IDB investment operations in CS proposed interventions that were backed up by some scientific research. However, since this evidence comes in many cases from developed countries<sup>24</sup> and sometimes presents mixed results, its proven effectiveness in certain contexts does not guarantee similar outcomes in LAC. Table 3.1 presents examples of the Bank's interventions in areas with evidence of effectiveness in the literature (see the Annex for a detailed review). Some recent studies show increasing political and investment support within the CS field in LAC (Muggah and Alvarado, 2018), as well as a rise in the availability of studies on the effectiveness of interventions in CS. Yet they also highlight that there are still significant gaps in areas such as crime prevention and rehabilitation (Bell et al. 2019), a context that underscores the need to develop and strengthen local research to enhance the impact of interventions in the region.

**Table 3.1. Examples of the empirical evidence supporting CS interventions**

	Literature findings	Examples of Inclusion in IDB operations
<b>Social Prevention</b>	Access to labor markets and employability programs for young people that promote access to quality and well-paid employment reduces the risk of criminal delinquency and re-offending. (Kessler et al., 2021@EEUU; Modestino, 2017@EEUU; Gelber, Isen y Kessler, 2014 @EEUU)	In the Bahamas (BH-L1033), the Bank funded several initiatives to improve the employability of young people. These consisted of (i) an employability program that provided personal development and training through community projects and corrective education, (ii) training for work in sectors with high labor demand, and (iii) the development of youth care services within the Ministry of Labor. Other similar operations: GY-L1042; UR-L1112; BR-L1343; ES-L1025; BR-L1387; JA-L1043.

22 In interviews, it was found that some of the projects came about as an IDB response to events such as the prison crisis in Guyana, an act of violence in Honduras, and protests of social discontent in Chile.

23 Following the guidelines defined in document [GN-2670-5](#), the SFDs provide a summary of which sector interventions work and in which contexts.

24 Using a database of over 1,300 CSJ interventions in 20 countries in the LAC region, the authors surveyed the published literature and highlighted the limited availability of peer-reviewed articles and programs with experimental designs (EI). Analyzing a sample of 25% of the publications, the authors found that only 20 (6%) were EI; another



	Literature findings	Examples of Inclusion in IDB operations
<b>Situational Prevention</b>	Crime prevention through environmental design principles, which include improving neighborhoods, developing physical infrastructure and providing urban services, is positively correlated with a greater perception of security and a reduction of crime and violence. (Piroozfarab et al., 2019@UK; Matzopoulos et al., 2020@Sudáfrica; Kondo et al., 2018@EEUU, Sweden y Colombia; Di Tella y Schargrodsky, 2010 @Colombia and Brazil)	In Honduras (HO-L1187), the neighborhood improvement program sought to improve the basic urban, social, and environmental infrastructure of neighborhoods with high crime rates, including investment in water and sanitation works, street lighting, and road improvements. Other similar operations include ES-L1025; JA-L1009; UR-L1112; AR-L1074
<b>Violence against Women</b>	Community mobilization and behavioral change programs that aim to modify social norms and traditional gender behaviors have shown positive results in reducing physical and sexual violence against women. (Pulervitz et al., 2006 @Brazil; Obach et al., 2011 @Chile; Ellsberg et al., 2015 @Low- and middle-income countries).	In Uruguay (UR-L1194), the Bank financed the expansion of the HM program, a psycho-educational intervention aimed at high school male and female teenagers, seeking to promote attitudes of gender equality and equity, respect and the inclusion of gender diversity and positive partners relationships. Similar other operations: BH-L1033; CR-L1137; UR-L1178; UR-L1194; ES-L1056; UR-L1112; GY-L1042.
<b>Professionalization of the Police</b>	Community policing programs that seek to improve the relationship between the police and the community have had promising results in this objective, as well as in reducing crime. However, it has been observed that their effectiveness has been modest in contexts with limited institutional capacity. (Blair et al., 2021 @ Brazil, Colombia, Liberia, Pakistan, Filipinas and Uganda).	In Panama (PN-X1011), the IDB funded activities to strengthen community policing. These activities included: the systematization, evaluation and adjustment of the Community Police Model; increased training of the preventive police management philosophy; and the acquisition of modular infrastructure and equipment for its implementation. Other similar operations: BR-L1331; BR L1343; BR-L1387; HO-L1187; PE-L1224; PR-L1077; PN X1011.
<b>Penitentiary System and Rehabilitation</b>	Rehabilitation helps with social reintegration and reduces recidivism, especially in programs based on cognitive-behavioral therapies. (Lipsey y Cullen, 2007; Landenberger y Lipsey, 2005; Lipsey et al., 2007).	In Guyana (GY-L1042), the Citizen Security Strengthening Program supported the creation of a rehabilitation and reintegration model of Guyana's Prison Service based on risk analysis methodologies and the application of cognitive-behavioral therapies. In particular, the program funded an assessment of the prison system's needs, the design of the rehabilitation and reintegration model, the design of a case management and follow-up program, and the training of Correctional Service staff. Other similar operations: BR-L1331; BR-L1343; BR-L1387; BR-L1417; BH-L1033; BR-L1546; PE-L1230; UR-L1112.
<b>Criminal Justice</b>	The modernization and digitalization of justice systems improves the quality, efficiency, expediency, and transparency of the judiciary and promotes productivity and economic development. (Chemin 2012 @India; Lichand y Soares, 2014@ @Brazil).	In Peru (PE-L1230), the Bank supported the justice administration system improvement, implementing the Electronic Judicial Record (EJE) for criminal affairs. The EJE allows for the digitization of documents, remote access for lawyers, judges and any involved parties, and reduces the need for physical paperwork when processing. Other similar operations include GU-1095 and BH-L1033.

Source: OVE, based on the literature review and loan proposal documents.

67 interventions (17%) included monitoring systems with some standardized, but not robust, documentation on results; while the majority (77%) did not have any results reporting (Muggah and Aguirre, 2013 and, more recently, Cano and Rojido, 2017).

- 3.9 The Bank has played an important role in generating and disseminating knowledge. The IDB developed a repository that systematizes empirical evidence from over 40 international sources on CS interventions<sup>25</sup> and serves as a reference for policymakers to design programs and strategies for implementation in their contexts. Furthermore, during this period, the Bank doubled its production of publications in this field, from five per year between 2009 and 2014 to ten per year between 2015 and 2020 (Annex).<sup>26</sup> The IDB also funded the first regional survey on individuals deprived of liberty in the Caribbean and the first victimization surveys in Argentina and Panama. The IDB promoted the strengthening of evaluation capacity by planning impact assessments in the design of most projects in the portfolio (87% of loan operations); however, as it happens with other areas of the bank,<sup>27</sup> few of these have been done.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the Bank has financed technical assistance that generated knowledge products (impact evaluations, case studies, reports), although these products are not systematized or available for consultation. The sector has generated relevant lines of research (such as in hot spot surveillance, positive parenting, prison management and the cost of crime) that have informed the design of new operations and technical dialogue with countries in the region. However, it is worth noting that the division does not have a formal research agenda that prioritizes areas of knowledge based on gaps in the literature.<sup>29</sup>
- 3.10 Most project designs were contextualized to local realities, though there is room for improvement. The analysis of loan documents, operational plans, and biannual monitoring reports revealed that 75% of the portfolio (29 operations) had

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25 <https://plataformadeevidencias.iadb.org/es/banco>

26 Among the publications, there are also 14 evaluations that estimate the impacts of interventions and policies related to criminal justice. These studies (experimental or quasi-experimental) measured, for example, the impact of conditional cash transfers on crime in general and on domestic violence, particularly in Colombia; the overall impact of Trinidad and Tobago's Cure Violence Initiative on reducing violence; the impact of the transition to oral proceedings in Ecuador; and the impact of COVID-19-related confinement policies on domestic violence in Argentina.

27 OVE's evaluation "IDB Impact Evaluations: Production, Use, and Influence" (document [RE-512-1](#)) (2017) found that between 2006 and 2016, the IDB proposed 531 impact evaluations in loan and TC documents. Of these, only 17% were completed; 53% were underway and 28% had been cancelled for various reasons, such as project cancellation, political changes, or problems in the design and implementation of the evaluations.

28 The review of the impact evaluation proposals for IDB programs shows a limited prioritization of proposals based on information and knowledge gaps. Furthermore, to date, of the 9 closed operations that included impact evaluations, only 4 were conducted.

29 In 2015, the cluster published the technical note "Closing Knowledge Gaps: Toward Evidence-Based Crime Prevention Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean" ([IDB-TN-848](#)). This document provides an analysis of the state of the art in citizen security research, to identify critical knowledge gaps in the literature and guide the IDB's research work in the sector for the next 4 years. This document, however, has not been updated to date.



designs that were adequately adapted to the local context. In addition, during interviews, counterparts emphasized that the IDB works together with governments to incorporate country-specific dynamics into its programs and that, although the CS sector is exposed to frequent political, administrative, and institutional changes,<sup>30</sup> the IDB manages to adapt to these changes, maintaining the relevance and technical rigor of the proposals. However, in a quarter of the portfolio, OVE identified contextualization issues such as a lack of alignment with the legal framework or incompatibility with local capacities. For example, in Panama (PN-X1011), an investment grant financed by the European Union established very strict contractual guidelines that differed from the procurement regulations and processes of the executing unit, which resulted in the cancelation of more than a third (36%) of the approved amount. In the case of Peru (PE-L1031), where the design aimed to improve interoperability between Justice Administration System institutions through the integration of computer systems but failed to account for the IT infrastructure conditions within these organizations. The lack of basic computer equipment required hindered the implementation of more sophisticated systems.

- 3.11 The oldest projects in the evaluated portfolio showed limitations in their vertical logic. OVE identified 10 projects with weak vertical logic,<sup>31</sup> seven of which were approved between 2009 and 2014; the more recently approved projects have more robust designs. Although the portfolio interventions were informed by findings from the literature, this was not sufficient to ensure that all defined activities were proportional to the expected objectives. Ten operations (out of 39) defined objectives and goals that were not feasible to achieve with the planned activities. For example, some operations aimed to reduce homicides through social prevention activities within family or community settings, which, on their own, were unlikely to have a significant impact on serious crimes, at least in the short term (JA-L1009, BL-L1014, among others). In other cases, the goal was to improve the perception of insecurity by strengthening the technical capacities of the Ministry of Security (AR-L1074) but without a clear connection between the objective and said actions or to improve the structuring of prevention services at a national level with various actions that aimed to strengthen the ministry, but without any clear contribution to the improvement of the structuring of the services (ES-L1025).

<sup>30</sup> For example, the program in Brazil was implemented with three different governments; during the implementation of the APROSI project in Panama there were three presidents, five security ministers, four OSEGI directors (and four IDB representatives).

<sup>31</sup> These projects are AR-L1074, BL-L1014, BR-L1331, BR-L1387, BR-L1497, BR-L1547, ES-L1025, HO-L1117, JA-L1009 and PE-L1031.



# 04

Execution, Results,  
and Sustainability  
of the CS Program

- 4.1 This chapter is divided in four sections. The first section discusses the main challenges in the execution of 33 active projects with over 50% of funds disbursed or closed. The second summarizes the general effectiveness analysis of eight closed loans (approved between 2009 and 2014), which have validations, as well as factors that affected their effectiveness rating. The third section makes a detailed analysis of a wider sample of 13 closed projects, focusing on their contribution to the five areas of intervention. Finally, the fourth section discusses the sustainability of the results achieved for the 13 projects discussed in section three. This section does not report on effectiveness results for TCs, due to the limitations found in monitoring and reporting of their results.

## A. Execution

- 4.2 The median time and costs of preparing and executing the CS portfolio were higher than the Bank's and other comparable groups' averages.<sup>32</sup> CS's median loan preparation time was 10 months longer than that of the Bank and 15 months longer than that of the rest of the ICS division.<sup>33</sup> Execution times were six and three months longer,<sup>34</sup> respectively, and 21 loans had an average 15-month extension.<sup>35</sup> The corresponding expenses were also higher than those of the IDB and other divisions (see details in Annex) due to the smaller average size of CS investment loans and longer preparation and execution times. The portfolio had three full cancellations, equivalent to 3.7% of the approved portfolio (US\$117 million),<sup>36</sup> and partial cancellations that were equivalent to 0.6% (US\$18 million).
- 4.3 The main factors that impacted the execution of the portfolio were the limitations of Executing Units (EU), political and administrative changes, deficiencies in the operational design of loans, issues with suppliers, and complications resulting from the

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32 The analysis excludes four double-booked investment loans that include only one CS component. These are: BR-L1187, BR-L1497, ES-L1056 and HO-L1117.

33 The preparation times for each operation are estimated as the days elapsed between the date of registration of the operation and the date of first eligibility. The results for the Bank and the ICS exclude CS operations.

34 Disbursing the first 25% of funds takes longer for the CS portfolio (25 months) than the IDB average (17 months) and ICS without CS (18 months), although it is like other comparators (LMK). After that, CS's portfolio disburses the same as or even faster than the average of the IDB and other comparators.

35 To calculate the cumulative extension, in cases where a single project contained two or more associated contracts, the data from the contract that suffered the greatest extension is taken.

36 The Union's Attorney General Modernization Program (BR-L1277) was canceled in 2014 due to budgetary restrictions. The second phase of CM (ES-L1092) in El Salvador was canceled in 2016 due to delays in parliamentary ratification and a lack of political commitment from the new government. The CSJ Strengthening Program with Minas Gerais (BR-L1417) was canceled in 2017 mainly due to the unfavorable fiscal situation in the state.

pandemic.<sup>37</sup> All 33 projects under analysis documented at least one execution challenge. OVE identified the most common execution challenges, based on information from progress monitoring and project completion reports, along with borrowers and bank staff interviews. The main challenge (66% of the 33 projects) was EU limitations, including a lack of inter-institutional coordination (Box 4.1), human resources with technical and managerial limitations, and budgetary restrictions. The second challenge was political and administrative changes (42% of projects), such as electoral cycles and leadership changes in countries like Argentina, Brazil, and Guyana, which resulted in a shift of priorities and a high turnover of staff in CS institutions. The lack of consideration in designs of enabling elements for the execution of the projects was also common (30% of projects), examples include the need to acquire technological infrastructure to implement computer systems and create management processes to guarantee their use. Finally, delays, limited quality, and cancellations of construction companies and consultants (30% of projects) were also highlighted. Additionally, the pandemic had an impact on the execution of 30% of the portfolio (43% of active projects between 2020 and 2021); however, OVE found that, with active supervision from the IDB, the organization was able to adapt and continue with the implementation of the programs. The IDB sought to mitigate these challenges by providing support through technical cooperation. As such, OVE found that 40% of the investment loans (17 out of 33 operations) had at least one operational support TC with products aimed at supporting the execution of the projects through the development of M&E systems, the design and execution of institutional strengthening plans, and EU training. Although there is information about the products and activities financed by the TCs, the monitoring systems do not allow for the evaluation of the effects this support had on the implementation or executing capacity of EUs. Since late 2023, the CS team has made specific efforts to mitigate these challenges, such as developing training for Bank specialists in the field and creating control panels to improve the efficiency of the EUs.

- 4.4 In line with the wide range of interventions in CS, the evaluated operations tended to cover a variety of priority areas within the same project, which generated significant complications in the execution and coordination of the majority of closed projects. Although the intervention models vary from focusing on only one area to comprehensive operations that tackle multiple areas, 62% of the portfolio (24 out of 39 operations) established objectives in two or more of the IDB's five areas of intervention. Identifying

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<sup>37</sup> For the analysis of those factors that affected implementation, OVE used systematized information on active projects with more than 50% of disbursement or those which were closed and then performed a frequency analysis. (See Annex).

and tackling the multitude of causes of crime and violence is coherent with the SFs and the literature but presents operative risks when focused on only one operation. Therefore, it was often difficult to articulate the contribution and complementarity of each activity to the objectives in the design phase of operations. This multitude of objectives resulted in complex institutional designs that involved working with multiple agencies at different degrees of capability, resources, and priorities, resulting in significant institutional coordination issues in 10 loans (of 33 actives with over 50% disbursed or closed).

#### *Box 4.1 Institutional arrangements of IDB programs in CS*

The institutional arrangements for this type of intervention are complex, as they not only involve line ministries (Security, Interior, and Justice) with limited prior experience in implementing projects financed by multilateral organizations but also require the participation and coordination of various sectoral agencies that are independent of political management, such as the police, the judicial administration system, the prison system, and other line ministries (social development, culture, labor, gender, health) that have their own operational logic. Although most of the projects did include instances of inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination in their design, when put into practice, these arrangements did not always work efficiently. Once a consensus was reached with all the counterparts involved, the project managed to maintain its closing date as planned.

For example, in Honduras, the implementation of the loan HO-L1063, aimed at improving the effectiveness of the National Police (PN), faced initial difficulties due to the complexity of the institutional arrangements in place. The Security Secretariat was the executing agency through a Coordination Unit created specifically for the project. In addition to the UCP, an Execution Council (CEP) was established to guide the program according to the national security policy, approve guidelines, and oversee execution. The CEP consisted of senior officials from various agencies, such as the Attorney General, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Security, and deputy ministers from agencies related to the PN. One of the main challenges at the beginning of the project was securing approval for regulations and operational plans that aligned with the agendas and interests of all involved parties.

Another example is the case of Jamaica (JA-L1043), where the coordinating committee was composed of the Ministry of National Security and the Ministry of Justice. The final evaluation of the program identified a disconnect between the two ministries, reflected in both the limited number of times the Steering Committee met and its loss of relevance as project implementation progressed. This disconnect also manifested in critical areas such as monitoring and evaluation (M&E). In this regard, the lack of coordination between the program's M&E unit and the respective offices within the ministries and service provider entities effectively limited access to data and strategies for collecting information on program monitoring indicators. Additionally, the delegation of functions between the project's executing unit and the respective service provider entities, which were meant to continue implementing certain activities, was affected.

Source: OVE.

## B. Overall effectiveness analysis of CS loan portfolio

- 4.5 This section summarizes the overall effectiveness of the CS investment loans that closed during the evaluation period, in addition to the factors that affected their performance rating. The analysis is based on the effectiveness ratings from PCR validations from the eight closed projects<sup>38</sup> that (i) have a Development Effectiveness Matrix (DEM) as part of their design, (ii) have a PCR validation done by OVE, and (iii) have as a general objective to reduce violence and/or crime (i.e., were originated within the citizen security cluster). These portfolio selection criteria allow for ratings to be comparable between projects. The portfolio includes operations approved between 2009 and 2014. As mentioned in the first chapter, the results of the effectiveness analysis cannot be generalized to the entire loan portfolio given the very limited number of closed projects and their age.
- 4.6 Most CS loans that closed during the evaluation period failed to demonstrate the achievement of their goals. Seven of the eight closed projects considered had negative effectiveness ratings (over 50% of the result indicators for SO were not achieved or could not be demonstrated), while the ratings of the rest of the evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, and sustainability) were mostly positive, which means that the objectives of the operations were mostly aligned with the Bank's strategies and the priorities and development needs of the country. The costs incurred for the achievement of the results were reasonable, and there is a high probability that the partial results achieved by the operation will be maintained over time (Annex).
- 4.7 According to OVE's analysis, negative effectiveness ratings are mainly explained by weaknesses in the vertical logic and in the results matrix. Of the seven projects with negative effectiveness ratings, five had issues related to the overly ambitious definition of their objectives and/or proposed activities that were not aligned with the set objectives (vertical logic).<sup>39</sup> Additionally, although CS projects scored highly on their DEM matrices,<sup>40</sup> OVE found

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38 This portfolio encompasses the 5 intervention areas and is comprised of the following operations: Citizen Security and Inclusion Program (AR-L1074), Community Action for Public Safety (BL-L1014), Violence Prevention and Social Inclusion Promotion Program (CR-L1031), Comprehensive Support Program for the Citizen Security Strategy (ES-L1025), Support Program for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Civic Coexistence (HO-L1063), Citizen Security and Justice Program III (JA-L1043), and the Modernization of the Administrative Justice System for Improving Services to the Peruvian Population (PE L1031), and Program to Strengthen Budget Control and Management Units (UR-L1031).

39 These 5 projects are: AR-L1074, BL-L1014, ES L1025, JA-L1043, and PE-L1031.

40 Most projects in the CS area had high evaluability scores in their DEM matrices (average 8.4). However, in interviews, specialists stated that the willingness to include impact indicators led to the inclusion of wider-reaching indicators, which were inadequate to measure the direct (attributable) results of the projects.

weaknesses in the result matrices of six out of seven projects that limited the evaluability of the operations and consequently affected their effectiveness rating.<sup>41</sup> These limitations include the wrong definition of indicators to measure the progress toward objectives and difficulty in the timely monitoring of their progress (Box 4.2). Four of the seven projects faced both limitations in their vertical logic, and weaknesses in their results matrices.

#### *Box 4.2. Result framework limitations of CS projects*

OVE analyzed the causality between activities, results, and objectives (vertical logic) and the evaluability of the result matrices at the specific objective (SO) level for the seven closed CS projects with a low effectiveness rating. This analysis showed that 18 of the 23 SOs in the analyzed projects had negative effectiveness ratings (i.e., partially unsatisfactory or unsatisfactory) despite the relatively satisfactory implementation of products and activities. Below is a list of the main factors identified:

**Weaknesses in vertical logic.** 10 of the 18 SOs (from five projects) with negative ratings had weaknesses in the logical relationship between the proposed activities, the expected results, and their objectives. In some cases, actions proposed at a local level were expected to have an effect at a national level. For example, Peru aimed to reduce the recidivism rate in youths participating in violent crimes at a national level through activities that were only implemented in six youth centers where it was possible to offer the proposed treatment (PE-L1031), which meant that it was not feasible to expect these activities to affect the national recidivism rate. In other cases, the causality of the intervention was not clear. For example, the creation of information systems to increase the government's capacity to formulate and implement security policies without specific use mechanisms (BL-L1014) or, in Peru, the creation of a crime observatory to improve the efficiency of expenditure in the CS sector (PE-L1031). In many cases, these deficiencies did not allow for the attribution of the implemented activities to the results.

**Evaluability weaknesses.** This problem was identified for 13 of the 18 SOs with negative ratings (six projects). OVE identified weaknesses in the definitions of indicators to measure the progress towards objectives and difficulties in measuring the proposed indicators.

- **Inadequate definition of indicators.** OVE found 10 SOs in five projects where the indicators were not able to fully measure the objective. For example, in PE-L1031, one of the objectives was to increase the coverage, productivity, and quality of justice services. However, the proposed indicators only measured productivity issues. In other cases, the indicator set may go in the opposite direction of what is anticipated from the intervention. For example, the implementation of activities that aim to improve police service systems and foster citizens' trust in the police, paradoxically, may lead to an increase in the indicators for the reporting of robberies and crimes, which contradicts the SOs that aim to reduce crime rates and public perception of insecurity (AR-L1074). OVE also found one case where product indicators were proposed instead of result indicators (PE-L1031).
- **Difficulties in measuring indicators.** In nine SOs from six projects, there were difficulties in measuring indicators due to a lack of available information at the time of measurement. For example, in Costa Rica, the recidivism rate could not be measured because no incarcerated person had graduated from the program. In Peru (PE-L1031), the application of interculturality and gender

<sup>41</sup> These 6 projects are: AR-L1074, BL-L1014, CR-L1031, ES L1025, PE-L1031, and UR-L1031.



criteria in CISAJ could not be measured as the responsible entities were not able to collect evidence to confirm that the services were implemented with this approach. In El Salvador (ES-L1025), the baseline and the achievement rate were not comparable — one was carried out in beneficiary municipalities and the other at the national level.

Source: OVE.

- 4.8 Weaknesses in the results frameworks differentially affected areas of intervention. The limited alignment between the project design and the proposed objectives especially affected the areas of *social prevention and governance*. Likewise, the evaluability weaknesses mainly affected the *penitentiary system and rehabilitation and governance* areas. In the first case, the programs were unable to robustly measure the effect of interventions on recidivism, while in the second, the results indicators of the results matrices for *governance* operations were not sufficient to assess the program's results (i.e., indicators related to the use of a system or indicators related to the adoption of certain practices that do not provide enough information to measure improvements in the strengthening of institutions).
- 4.9 The adequate indicators mostly achieved their targets. These indicators reflected the achievements of activities implemented and had objective measurements within a reasonable timeframe.<sup>42</sup> Despite the impact of vertical logic problems and inadequate indicator definition on the projects' effectiveness rating, OVE identified 53 (out of 75) indicators that were adequate to measure program results. Of these, 31 achieved more than 80% of the target, nine achieved less than 79% of the target, and 13 were not measured either due to a lack of means of verification or because the information was not collected.

## C. Effectiveness analysis of the loan portfolio by area of intervention

- 4.10 This section provides a detailed analysis of a broader sample of 13 closed projects, focusing on their contribution to the five areas of intervention. The expanded portfolio includes the eight

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42 For example, in El Salvador, two indicators were used to measure the increase in the social and workforce integration of at-risk youth: the proportion of youth aged 15 to 24 who neither study nor work in the beneficiary municipalities, and the proportion of at-risk youth who completed training in peace culture and workforce and economic inclusion and are working 6 months after the end of each annual intervention. These indicators are linked to the activities implemented within the project's framework, which were mainly aimed at the social inclusion of youth through social inclusion activities (improvements in the physical environment and violence prevention programs) and workforce and economic inclusion of at-risk youth; and their measurement was feasible.



operations analyzed in the previous section, plus three operations originating in other sectors (Gender and Diversity and Housing and Urban Development) with at least one SO in the area and two operations that have PCRs but not yet validated by OVE.<sup>43</sup> These operations were approved between 2009 and 2016 in 10 countries. For this analysis, OVE classified the objectives of each operation in the five areas of intervention and mapped their intermediate and final results based on the reference framework developed (see Figure 1.1). The main sources of the results reported are the PCRs, their validation notes, and, where specifically indicated, impact evaluations. Unlike the previous section, which presents the project's overall effectiveness ratings based on PCR validation notes (which aggregate results across all objectives following the PCR guidelines), this section focuses on results at the intervention area level based on indicators considered appropriate to measure progress. Given the limited number of operations, the results of this section cannot be generalized to the portfolio.

- 4.11 Although most projects failed to demonstrate the achievement of their overall objectives in the PCRs and validation notes, this analysis identified important contributions of the Bank's program in several areas. *Social prevention* interventions showed positive results in terms of reducing risk factors and violent behavior. Furthermore, progress in reducing violence against women has been made through an increase in the number of victims seeking help and reporting crime. Interventions in the *professionalization of the police*, which were part of a broader context of the sector's reforms, contributed to the strengthening of police technical capacity and, in some cases, to a reduction of crime. *Criminal justice* interventions increased the coverage of justice services and promoted a wider range of offerings for prison alternatives and a restorative justice approach. Some *rehabilitation and social reintegration* programs contributed to a reduction in recidivism rates, although mechanisms were not always included to feasibly make their measurement robust. Finally, in *sector governance*, programs supported actions aimed at improving the quality and availability of information systems with limited results. The IDB also strengthened governance through regional dialogue and knowledge-generation initiatives.

<sup>43</sup> The three closed projects originated in other divisions with at least one specific objective in CS are PROCIDADES Novo Hamburgo (BR-L1187/2012), Ciudad Mujer El Salvador (ES-L1056/2011), and Ciudad Mujer Honduras (HO-L1117/2016). The two projects with PCR but without a validation note by OVE are Citizen Security and Justice Programme II (JA L1009/2009) and Expansion of the Comprehensive Security Program of Panama (PN-X1011/2013).

## 1. Social prevention

4.12 Violence prevention programs (focused on reducing risk factors in vulnerable populations) showed some positive results for reducing risk factors of violent behavior.<sup>44</sup> Programs within this area implemented socio-educational models focused on vulnerable groups (mainly young people and children) through the building of community centers, training for parents on positive parenting, and activities on community conflict resolution, among others. In Brazil (BR-L1187, 2012), the implementation of socio-educational, vocational-professional, leisure, sports, and value formation in two neighborhoods in Novo Hamburgo with high crime rates contributed to a reduction of 75% in the homicide rate in said neighborhoods (although there is no robust measurement of this impact).<sup>45</sup> In Jamaica (JA-L1043, 2014), positive parenting training, psychotherapy for victims, violence prevention and conflict resolution training in schools, and the provision of services for the interruption of gang violence, among others, generated cultural changes and achieved a reduction of coercive parenting, achieving that 68% of intervened communities reached ceasefire agreements between gangs. Furthermore, JA L1009 financed a scholarship program for youth in secondary and tertiary education, and 50 communities received training aimed at preventing community violence. However, it was not possible to measure the contribution of these activities to the reduction of violence in the communities.<sup>46</sup> In Belize (BL-L1014, 2010), while there was a reduction in bad behavior by at-risk youth (measured by cognitive ability and anger control) who took part in activities at the Gateway Youth Center (financed by the IDB), the same results were not seen with participants of the positive development program that was implemented at high schools. In Costa Rica (CR-L1031, 2011), the launch of seven Civic Centers for Peace for children and young people under 18, together with community recreational activities, contributed to a reduction in the number of underage offenders in the beneficiary communities compared to the national level.

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44 According to the literature, most prevention programs include several interventions with a theoretical connection to violent crimes (i.e., homicides) that is not always clear. In some cases, such as the IDB programs, there are even homicide reduction targets, but a theoretical model (theory of change) is not always included to link planned actions with a reduction in homicides. In essence, the literature shows that a change in homicide rate over two points in time does not necessarily allow us to reach a conclusion on the impact of prevention programs since numerous factors unrelated to the intervention can have a potential effect on violence. (See Cano and Rodijo, 2017).

45 The PCR justifies the attribution based on the theoretical foundations of the results achieved by another program (Fica Vivo!) and a comparison of the situation before and after the project.

46 The incidence of violence in the communities targeted under JA-L1009 decreased, but it was not possible to attribute this result to the project. The program had a weak vertical logic, which included activities that, by themselves, were not feasible in reducing serious crimes like homicide, at least not in the short-term.

The program also made progress in improving the perception of security in intervened communities, although the overall target was not met.<sup>47</sup>

- 4.13 Programs focused on introducing at-risk youth into the labor market through training or partnership programs with the private sector had mixed results. The comprehensive support program for violence prevention strategy in El Salvador (ES-L1025) achieved a 3.45 percentage point reduction in the rate of young people who neither study nor work in the beneficiary municipalities. It also managed to put 67% of at-risk youths into employment through its training and entrepreneurship programs. In Jamaica (JA-L1009), the employment and job stability goals were not achieved as part of the labor programs for at-risk youth.<sup>48</sup> Private sector participation in the program was achieved to provide employment opportunities for this group. However, the third phase of the project (JA-L1043), with learnings on how to focus on the highest-risk population to reintegrate young people into the labor market, succeeded in getting qualified participants into employment through the services offered. Furthermore, those participants with intermediate work qualifications were able to complete the final vocational certification level provided by the program.
- 4.14 Programs that sought to reduce violence against women have achieved positive results in terms of increased numbers of victims seeking help and reporting this crime. Operations sought to reduce the prevalence of violence against women (VAW) by providing psychological, legal, and empowerment services to women and promoting changes in the behavior of the population. Through the construction and operation of the Ciudad Mujer (CM) Centers in El Salvador (ES-L1056, 2011), the percentage of female victims who sought help and assistance in the centers and other institutions was increased.<sup>49</sup> The program also sought to prevent cases of violence and reduce re-victimization, but the PCR did not provide evidence of its achievement. In the CM Honduras (HO-L1117, 2016), the percentage of women (in the project intervention area) who experienced violence (during the last year) and the percentage of women who justify physical

47 In the case of CR-L1031, a reduction in the rate of assaults or thefts in the beneficiary communities compared to the national level was reported. However, no evidence was presented regarding the relationship between the assault and theft rates and the young perpetrators of those crimes who were the subjects of the intervention.

48 It was anticipated that 50% of the beneficiaries who completed the training would find a job and maintain it for at least 6 months. However, by the end of the project, only 12% of them achieved this.

49 Bustelo, M., Marínex, S., Millard, M.P., & Silva, J.R. (2016). Evaluación de Impacto del Proyecto Ciudad Mujer en El Salvador. IDB. <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/spanish/document/Evaluaci%C3%B3n-de-impacto-del-Proyecto-Ciudad-Mujer-en-El-Salvador.pdf>

violence by their partner were reduced.<sup>50</sup> The Bank supported Colombia and Peru in implementing reforms to the regulatory and institutional framework of the policy on prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV), including the creation of the national GBV monitoring system and a new data architecture and case tracking in Colombia, as well as the approval of the national VCM strategy and the implementation of the system.

## **2. Professionalization of the police**

4.15 Operations in Honduras and Uruguay implemented strategic planning, management, and police training programs, with positive results in citizens' perceptions of the police institution and in crime reduction. The IDB supported the comprehensive reform of the Honduran National Police (HO-L1063, 2012), which led to structural changes in the planning and management of police forces, including the creation and implementation of an internal reporting system along with a strategic plan for the Security Secretariat and local security plans. The project contributed to a 14.3% reduction in the homicide rate, and a 7.5% increase in trust in the police; however, these results could not be attributed exclusively to the intervention because other security strategies were implemented by the Government during the intervention period.<sup>51</sup> The Costa Rica program (CR-L1031, 2010) funded the development of a curriculum, training for prison police, the design and development of a prison information system, and the establishment of 11 police delegations (model). Using data from the Proximity Survey (2018), the PCR reports improvements in the cantonal police evaluation index (which measures community perceptions of police performance) and the cantonal security and victimization index in areas where the program intervened (compared to areas where it did not), although the impact on the national police quality index could not be measured due to problems with the source of information. In the case of Uruguay (UR-L1062, 2012), the IDB supported the implementation of the Problem Solution Oriented Community Policing<sup>52</sup> (POP) methodology in the Montevideo Police Headquarters, which included: training in community policing, criminal investigation and analysis, strengthening

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50 This PCR was published in July 2024 and has not been validated by OVE.

51 These include the beginning of a process of involving members of the military in public security tasks in 2011, which was formalized under the Military Police of Public Order in 2013, as well as the creation in 2014 of the National Interinstitutional Security Force. Both approaches prioritize the capture and immediate containment of violence.

52 POP reorients policing towards problem-solving, rather than the traditional reactive model. In relation to this strategy, Hinkle et al. (2020) conclude, in a meta-analysis of 34 evaluations, that the programs achieved an average reduction of 34% in crime and disorder rates, especially when combined with other tactics, such as hot-spot patrols. However, these have limited impact on the feeling of safety and police legitimacy.

the technological infrastructure, among others. The project achieved a reduction in the number of robberies between 1.2% and 3.2% in the period between 2013 and 2015. (IDB, 2018b). Finally, in Panama (PN-X1011, 2013), the PCR reported that the expansion and strengthening of the Community Police model in the country achieved its objective of increasing the number of complaints from crime victims in the beneficiary municipalities.

- 4.16 In terms of improving criminal investigations, the programs in Honduras and Uruguay achieved positive results. In Honduras (HO-L1063, 2012), the strengthening of local criminal investigation capacities, along with the development and implementation of an information platform and the establishment of a crime analysis center, allowed for an increase in the number of complete homicide reports with adequate quality standards to be sent to the Public Prosecutor's Office. In Uruguay (UR-L1062, 2012), the implementation of the Police Prediction Tool (PREDPOL) and the mapping of criminal activities allowed for significant progress in improving the quality of criminal analysis carried out by the National Police and the effectiveness of police surveillance.<sup>53</sup>

### 3. Criminal Justice

- 4.17 A program in Peru increased access to judicial services, with improvements in administrative efficiency, but without evidence of the quality of services or the offer of services with a focus on gender and multiculturalism. The project PE-L1031 (2011) financed the construction of judicial headquarters and Integrated Centers of the Justice Administration System (CISAJ) in areas with a high procedural burden and low coverage of SAJ services in the poorest quintiles of the Peruvian population. This was reflected in an increase in the percentage of final decisions issued annually in court cases in the intervention areas (from 63% to 78%) and in decisions in alimony and parentage cases (from 57% to 62%). Although CISAJ included professionals sensitized to issues of gender, domestic violence, and indigenous culture, the results for these populations were not measured because the relevant information was not collected.<sup>54</sup> In addition, the program supported the process of networking among the entities of the judicial administration system (SAJ) to reduce

<sup>53</sup> In addition, the program laid the groundwork for the creation and implementation of the High Operational Dedication Program by the Ministry of the Interior and the Uruguayan National Police, which implemented the strategy of policing hot spots. This strategy achieved a 23% reduction in robberies in the targeted areas in 2016 (Chainey et al., 2020).

<sup>54</sup> The PE-L1230 (2019), which is currently being implemented, expands its coverage through the availability of public information (with an open data approach) and greater access to social rehabilitation mechanisms. In addition, the efforts to increase the efficiency of the SAJP through the simplification, digitalization, and interoperability of systems will continue.

the excessive burden of judicial work and improve productivity and efficiency. Although information systems were developed and the technological infrastructure was improved (i.e., the information system for the Ministry of the Interior and the National Police, the integrated file management system and decisions of the Constitutional Court, and interoperability pilots), the project failed to achieve interoperability of systems due to design flaws and coordination problems.<sup>55</sup>

- 4.18 Given the high levels of preventive detention in the region, programs in Jamaica, Guyana, and the Bahamas promoted the expansion of offerings of alternatives to incarceration and restorative justice (RJ), but results are only available for the case of Jamaica. Program JA-L1009 (2009) supported the construction of seven community Courts, training for judicial authorities, and community awareness of RJ policies.<sup>56</sup> Although a policy framework for RJ was approved, legislation remained pending. In 2014, this program (JA-L1043) was expanded to seek solutions to eligible cases, focusing on children and youth in conflict with the law. Although the child referral pilot<sup>57</sup> could not be implemented due to delays in legislative approval, the program contributed to an increase in the number of RJ cases reaching a judicial settlement between perpetrators and victims (from 50% to 95% in the target communities) through the implementation of RJ services in the beneficiary communities.

#### **4. Penitentiary system and rehabilitation**

- 4.19 Rehabilitation and social reintegration programs based on models of comprehensive care for incarcerated individuals have shown improvements in the range of services available to the beneficiary population, but they have not always included mechanisms that would make it possible to measure their results in terms of reducing recidivism rates in a robust way.<sup>58</sup> For example, the program in

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55 The design proposed improving interoperability between SAJ institutions through computer integration of systems, but it did not consider the entities' IT infrastructure conditions, as they did not have the necessary computer equipment. The implementation approach did not provide tools to facilitate coordination between the two executing agencies, which are constitutionally separate branches of government.

56 Restorative justice measures are aimed at suspending the criminal process on condition that the accused person acquires and fulfills commitments to repair the damage committed against the victim and the community.

57 The program aimed to prevent children and adolescents with legal problems from being criminally prosecuted, tried, and detained, and instead give them the opportunity to do community work under the supervision of a committee. However, the implementation of this component required legislative approval, which was delayed until the final stages of the project, significantly affecting its activities.

58 This is due to privacy issues (UR-L1062), limitations in the results matrix (lack of an indicator to measure recidivism) in the program (PE-L1031), or timing issues (i.e., there were no graduated beneficiaries at the closing date) in the CR-L1031 program. The Belize project (BL-L1014) measured the results of reducing recidivism among the beneficiaries of the two rehabilitation centers operated by the program, but there are problems of underestimating this result in cases where juveniles do not return to the same centers or become adults and go to prison.



Belize (BL-L1014, 2010) designed and implemented a continuous intervention model for incarcerated youth, which helped reduce recidivism in two detention centers. In El Salvador (ES-L1025, 2012), it contributed to reducing the recidivism of juveniles between the ages of 18 and 24 in the prisons of the program through training in labor skills and competencies for employment and the development of agreements with the private sector to create sources of employment for former convicts, among other things. In Panama (PN-X1011, 2013), the implementation of a comprehensive model and the training of guardians helped to reduce recidivism among rehabilitated juveniles in one of the compliance centers intervened. The results could not be measured in the other five centers. In Uruguay (UR-L1062, 2012), an impact evaluation conducted after the project's completion measured the outcomes of the first cohort of beneficiaries from the proximity support strategy for adolescents in conflict with the law. It showed preliminary evidence of a decrease in the number of youths investigated for robbery and an increased "likelihood" of their reintegration into the labor market or formal education system. In Costa Rica (CR-L1031, 2011), support was provided to address the prison crisis through the construction of 11 comprehensive care units (Unidades de Atención Integral, UAI) in conjunction with the prison aftercare program. At the end of the project, it was not possible to measure the recidivism rate of the population served since no convict had left or completed the process in a UAI, although positive results were found in the evolution of the prison efficiency indices and in the "potential" for the reintegration of juveniles. In Peru (PE-L1031, 2011), a care system for the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders was implemented, with psychological care, socio-educational and family activities, as well as a physical infrastructure to carry out these activities. The program reported positive results in the application of socio-educational measures by the judges according to the open environment model promoted by the project, but the results of reintegration were not measured at the level of the beneficiary population.

## 5. Governance of the sector

- 4.20 Programs in the area of Governance focused on strengthening the capacity of governing bodies to develop evidence-based public security policies through actions to improve the quality and availability of information systems, with limited results. In El Salvador (ES-L1025), activities to consolidate the Directorate of Information and Analysis (DIA) were financed through the funding of technological equipment and tools, such as the implementation of a comprehensive platform for the strategic management of criminal information. This made it possible to create a single system for all departments of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. In Argentina (AR-L1074) the objective

of strengthening the Ministry of Security of the PBA was not achieved. The program did not carry out activities to improve the ministry's internal processes, nor did it effectively implement the Criminal Information System in the planned police stations because they required unforeseen investments in connectivity and hardware. On the other hand, the development of two victimization surveys was funded to improve decision-making on security issues, although there is no evidence of their use. In Belize (BL-L1014), the inter-institutional information system for the management of public security was set up, but the expected use of these tools by the various planned agencies was not achieved due to the lack of a binding mechanism for the institutions to share their information.

- 4.21 In addition to the operational results, the IDB has implemented capacity-building and dialogue promotion activities, primarily funded through TC, which have shown high levels of client participation and satisfaction, although there are still opportunities for greater internal involvement. These activities include "Security Week" and the online course "Leaders for the Management of Citizen Security and Justice." The Security Week, a regional event that facilitates dialogue on challenges and advances in security policy among key authorities in the sector, as well as training clinics for IDB project managers, has seen an increase in participation from 150 participants in 2009 to 400 in 2023. While participants in these events have expressed satisfaction, there is no evidence of the training's effectiveness in building capacity. However, although the event attempted to mainstream the issue of CSJ within the IDB Group, the interviews conducted by OVE indicated that there is room for improvement in addressing the issue at the Group level. On the other hand, the massive open online course (MOOC) "Leaders for the Management of Citizen Security and Justice" has also registered a high level of participation, with more than 1,000 participants in 2020, mainly from the public and academic sectors.

#### *Box 4.3. Regional Policy Dialogue*

Security Week was created to provide a platform for regional dialogue and exchange among public security policymakers and directors of programs aimed at preventing and controlling violence and crime, on the key challenges facing the region. According to administrative information, since 2008, thirteen Security Weeks and 12 Clinics have been held in different countries of the region, organized in partnership with the governmental authorities of each country. These events have dealt with various topics, including governance in the social prevention of violence, strengthening the evaluation of CSJ policies, transparent security management, challenges for the consolidation of CSJ



public policies, digital innovation, and the future of CSJ institutions. The aim of the clinics is to promote the exchange of knowledge to strengthen capacities, build collaborative networks, and improve the design and implementation of CSJ programs.

Source: OVE

## D. Sustainability of CS portfolio results

4.22 Although projects failed to demonstrate effectiveness in their overall objectives, the sustainability of the achieved results of the operations is satisfactory according to the self-assessments (PCR) validated by OVE. This analysis is based on the results reported in the effectiveness by area of intervention section for the 13 closed investment loans. According to OVE's analysis (documentation and interviews), two factors contributed to ensuring the sustainability of the partial results achieved by the CS interventions in the areas of intervention:

**(i) *The availability of financial and human resources for the maintenance of infrastructure works and the mechanisms developed to ensure the continuity of the services created by the programs.***

4.23 Most of the infrastructure works financed (police training centers, youth centers, and comprehensive care centers) and the information systems developed had maintenance and staffing plans, and a budget allocated for their proper functioning.<sup>59</sup> In some cases (UR-L1062, BL-L1014), centers or services for youth were transferred and/or taken over by a public entity to ensure their sustainability. However, in the case of Belize, in 2022, the center funded by the program was no longer used for youth activities and began housing the offices of the Department of Youth Services. However, youth-oriented activities, in line with the original purpose of the center, were resumed in a new space, The Hub Center, which was not funded by the IDB. In the case of Brazil (BR-L1343, under implementation), thanks to the lessons learned from previous operations, the creation of an innovative public-private financing mechanism was proposed to guarantee the operation of the Youth Centers. In the case of the Ciudad Mujer Centers (ES-L1056), given the budgetary constraints of the participating institutions, alternative models were adopted (i.e., by referral mechanisms to redirect services to the corresponding institutions police and justice that do

<sup>59</sup> In the case of Peru (PE-L1031), there is a budget to maintain the infrastructure of the centers, but there are still staff positions that need to be filled to provide adequate services.

not provide their services within the center) or remote care (for psychological services) to ensure the provision of services within the center. To ensure the sustainability of comprehensive care units for the incarcerated population in Costa Rica (CR-L1031), models of preventive maintenance carried out by inmates were promoted (through the Building Opportunities program) with funds from the Ministry of Justice and Peace. Finally, in the case of Honduras (HO-L1063), the "Population Security Rate" tax was created as a funding mechanism to continue financing actions to combat delinquency and crime.

**(ii) *The institutionalization, legitimization, and social appropriation of programs by institutions and final beneficiaries.***

4.24 The youth and women's centers funded by IDB programs in El Salvador (ES-L1056), Costa Rica (CR-L1031), and Jamaica (JA-L1009 and JA-L1043) have been able to generate their own demand, while social appropriation mechanisms have helped ensure their sustainability. According to the information gathered from the interviews with officials, the positive evaluation of the beneficiaries was the key to ensuring the sustainability of the services provided. This is the case for services provided by public defense offices, services for women victims of violence, and counseling services for adolescents in Peru (PE-L1031). In Brazil, the community justice activities promoted by the BR-L1187 program have been institutionalized in a municipal program through citizen pacification support services. Finally, the institutionalization of the change processes through legislative and governmental means through reforms in police training and citizen control mechanisms promoted in the programs of Honduras helped to guarantee the sustainability of the results of the program. Additionally, the IDB continues to support the reforms and professionalization of the police service by approving two investment loans in 2018 and 2023.

4.25 Among the main factors affecting the sustainability of the partial results achieved, OVE identified: changes in institutional priorities and problems of inter-institutional coordination. Although in several cases strong political commitment was demonstrated through the establishment and implementation of sector development strategies and plans (CR-L1031, HO-L1063), in other cases changes in authorities and institutional priorities in some countries (PE-L1031, BR-L1187, GY-L1042) affected the sustainability of some program results. Similarly, the issue of inter-institutional coordination was mentioned in most of the interviews as a constant challenge for the sustainability of CS interventions (AR-L1075, ES-L1056, PE-L1031), despite the establishment of inter-institutional coordination instances

during the design and implementation of the projects. In fact, one of the lessons learned from the programs that promoted the interoperability of information systems, for example, was the need to accompany these processes with institutional cultural change management programs to ensure the acceptance and sustainability of the systems. Finally, none of the interventions that promoted pilot programs to test innovative solutions in the region (mainly prevention, VAW, and rehabilitation issues) included a scaling-up strategy to replicate successful solutions to ensure the continuity of the programs beyond seeking a demonstration effect.



# 05

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1 In a region with alarming levels of crime, violence and impunity, citizen security is fundamental for economic and social development. LAC has a homicide rate significantly higher than the world average, with notable regional variations: Central America has the highest rates, while Brazil and Mexico host cities with the highest homicide rates worldwide. Insecurity is the main concern of citizens in the region, generating high economic, social, and institutional costs. These are reflected in public expenditure on security which is almost double that of developed economies. In addition, insecurity increases the costs of doing business, negatively affecting regional competitiveness.
- 5.2 The IDB's citizen security operations were aligned with the needs of the region, the strategic priorities of the countries, and the IDB for the sector. The Bank focused its financing on citizen security in countries with the highest rates of violence, such as Honduras, Jamaica, and Brazil. Although some countries with high needs, such as El Salvador, Trinidad and Tobago, and Mexico, did not receive support proportional to their needs. In 92% of the operations, their objectives were aligned with the national priorities reflected in their National Development Plans. In addition, 85% of the interventions had targeting criteria to serve the neediest sectors and promoted a gender approach and attention to vulnerable groups. In terms of strategic alignment, 62% of the operations were aligned with the strategic objectives of the sector set out in the IDB Strategies with the countries. Also, all operations were aligned, in accordance with the IDB's comprehensive approach, to one or more of the five areas of intervention of the SFD, with a particular emphasis on the social prevention area.
- 5.3 All investment projects in the portfolio were informed by the literature, most adequately reflected local realities, and had an appropriate vertical logic. The Bank used evidence from the literature to inform the design of all its interventions. 75% of interventions were adapted to local contexts, responding in a timely and flexible manner to political-administrative changes. Regarding the vertical logic of operations, while one-fourth of the projects defined very ambitious objectives or activities that were not proportional to the expected objectives, this weakness was more frequent for the older projects in the portfolio (approved between 2009 and 2014). OVE found that the most recently approved projects have more robust designs.
- 5.4 The Bank has played an important role in generating and disseminating knowledge on the effectiveness of CS interventions. The IDB developed a repository that systematizes empirical evidence from more than 40 international sources on CS interventions and is a reference for policymakers to design

CS programs and strategies. In addition, during the period, the Bank doubled the production of publications and financed victimization surveys in Argentina and Panama. The sector has generated relevant lines of research (such as in hot spot surveillance, positive parenting, prison management and the cost of crime) that have informed the design of new operations and technical dialogue with countries in the region. However, the division does not have a formal research agenda that prioritizes areas of knowledge based on gaps in the literature. The Bank also promoted the importance of evaluation as part of the operation's design. However, once the projects closed, few were carried out.

- 5.5 The main execution challenge was the limited capacity of the project-executing units, including the lack of inter-institutional coordination. Given the Bank's comprehensive approach to the sector, nearly two-thirds of the operations have objectives in two or more areas of intervention. This resulted in problems of inter-institutional coordination in one-third of the projects in the portfolio and in project implementation delays. The second most frequent challenge was political-administrative changes, such as electoral cycles and changes in leadership in the countries. To mitigate these challenges, on several occasions, the loans were accompanied by technical cooperation that financed products aimed at supporting execution through, for example, training, development of monitoring systems, and institutional strengthening plans, among others. However, no evidence was found on the effectiveness of these resources in improving project implementation.
- 5.6 The effectiveness of the closed portfolio is low: seven of the eight closed loans failed to demonstrate the achievement of their objectives. 7 of the 8 projects closed had negative effectiveness ratings. The vertical logic limitations identified in the relevance analysis for the old projects (2009-2014) is one of the factors identified that explain the low effectiveness rating. Of the 7 with a negative rating, 5 had problems related to the overly ambitious definition of objectives and/or financed activities not aligned with the objectives (vertical logic). Another factor identified was the weaknesses in the results matrices in 6 (out of 7) projects that compromised the ability to measure their effectiveness. These include an incorrect definition of indicators to measure the progress of objectives (indicators that failed to fully measure the objectives, whose results could be affected by external factors or that were considered as outputs and not results), and the difficulty in monitoring their progress in a timely manner, due to the lack of data collection or the lack of consideration of the frequency with which this information is collected.

- 5.7 Although most projects failed to demonstrate the achievement of their objectives, OVE identified important contributions of the Bank's program in several areas. However, given the limited number of operations analyzed and age, these contributions cannot be generalized to the entire portfolio. Social prevention interventions showed positive results in terms of reducing risk factors and violent behavior. In addition, progress has been made in reducing violence against women through an increase in the number of victims seeking help and report the crime. Police professionalization interventions, which were part of broader sector reforms, contributed to strengthening the technical capacities of the police and thus, in some cases, to reducing crime. Criminal justice interventions increased coverage of justice services and promoted the expansion of the offer of alternative mechanisms to prison and the restorative justice approach. Some rehabilitation and social reintegration programs contributed to the reduction of recidivism rates, although in a few cases they included mechanisms that make feasible their robust measurement. Finally, in the governance sector, the programs supported actions aimed at improving the quality and availability of information systems with limited results. The IDB also strengthened governance through regional dialogue and knowledge-generation initiatives.
- 5.8 To strengthen IDB's capacity to address the needs of the countries, OVE proposes the following recommendations:
1. Strengthen the design of operations by (i) defining objectives aligned and proportional to the proposed activities to ensure a plausible attribution of results to operations; (ii) strengthening project results frameworks by identifying indicators aligned with the objectives, whose frequency corresponds to the planned implementation period of the operation and that allow to measure the effectiveness of the interventions.
  2. Support the implementation of operations by (i) strengthening the institutional capacities of the executing units involved in project execution, through a tool that allows the identification, monitoring and mitigation of the characteristic risks of the sector, such as the lack of inter-institutional coordination, and (ii) documenting and evaluating the strategic use of the support for the strengthening of the executing units (for example, TC resources), and generating lessons learned about their effectiveness that can be used in new operations.

3. Promote the generation of strategic knowledge to enable the identification and replication of interventions that reduce violence and crime, increasing the security of citizens. This includes:
  - a. Focus on generating evidence (empirical or resulting from triangulation of evaluations with quantitative and qualitative methods) on the effectiveness and potential for replication and scaling up of the interventions supported by the portfolio, and where possible, collaborate with other institutions (research centers, universities, other development banks) to develop knowledge in the identified areas. In addition, systematize the knowledge products generated through TCs so that they can be used strategically by the division.
  - b. Deepen knowledge on coordination schemes to make comprehensive interventions (that support more than one area of intervention) more effective.
  - c. Develop a document containing a strategic prioritization of the sector's lines of research in accordance with the region's knowledge gaps in order to guide the IDB's work for the next years and enhance its role as a key knowledge partner.





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Established in 1999 as an independent evaluation office, OVE evaluates the performance and development effectiveness of the activities of the Inter-American Development Bank Group (IDB Group). These evaluations seek to strengthen the IDB Group through learning, accountability and transparency.

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