BELIZE
The Inter-American Network for the Prevention of Violence and Crime was created following the Resolution 2866 approved during the 44th General Assembly of the Organization of American States, held in Paraguay, in 2014. The Resolution reaffirms that the prevention of violence and crime is a strategic priority for the region and instructed the General Secretariat to establish a Network to provide assistance to Member States on the enforcement and implementation of public policies, programs and initiatives in the area of violence and crime prevention. Since then, the OAS Department of Public Security has been working on the creation and implementation of the Network and its activities, which has been officially launched on November 29th, 2017.

The interaction among the members of the Network takes place on in-person meetings that are carried out across the Americas and through its Website, where members can exchange experience and knowledge in the discussion forums, chats and learn more about different initiatives, policies and program in the area of crime and violence prevention around the world. The Website also features a variety of multimedia resources such as news, blog posts, videos, etc., available to its members.

Following the same Resolution a Fund for voluntary contributions was created to cover direct and indirect costs, which will not generate interest and is non-refundable. The Fund is managed by the DPS.

OBJECTIVES

To establish a dialogue and consultation mechanism, and foster the exchange of experiences, information, best practices, data and points of view among member states and different stakeholders on the issue of crime and violence prevention.

To facilitate the interaction and cooperation among different sectors to increase knowledge and promote the development of more efficient and effective policies, initiatives and programs to prevent violence and crime and to create safer and more peaceful societies in the hemisphere.

RESULTS

In 2016, the Network was officially launched during the event “Latin America and the Caribbean in action to reduce homicides” that took place at the OAS Headquarters. Additionally, in the same occasion, the Website of the Network, where the members have the opportunity to access a variety of publications, best practices, news, videos, among other materials and interact with other experts, professionals and people interested in the area of crime and violence prevention was made available through the OAS Website.

In the next months and years, it is expected, through the Network, to provide technical assistance to member states for the development and evaluation of actions, policies, and programs; provide inputs for the formulation of actions, policies, and programs; increase horizontal cooperation among States in the framework of prevention and promote interaction and exchange of knowledge and practices among different actors and stakeholders.
PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Program was created in order to support Member States in promoting citizen security through a comprehensive and multidimensional prevention strategy aimed at reducing and mitigating risk factors of violence and crime, especially among Youth. All of its actions are supported by intersectoral articulation, evidence base, community participation, youth leadership, and the promotion of peace, from a gender and human rights perspective.

The Program seeks the constant mobilization of different sectors of society for the optimization of its results, with the ultimate goal of pushing a prevention approach in the countries agendas. It has four phases of implementation. The first one is an evaluation of the prevention entities in the jurisdiction where the Program is to be implemented (executive, judicial and legislative powers, and the civil society). The second one is the elaboration of a series of recommendations for the public sector aimed at optimizing the work of the evaluated prevention entities, including the selection of possible interventions for implementation (from the Program’s catalog of a regularly updated evidence based interventions). The third one is the development of an action plan in collaboration with local actors, taking into account their priorities and the recommendations made. The last one is the implementation of the chosen interventions adapted to the local context, with a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan.

All of the Program’s actions are supported and disseminated an ongoing communications strategy. The information obtained at the end of each execution cycle is used for the elaboration of a series of final recommendations and for the optimization of the Program’s later editions.

OBJECTIVES

To develop a hemispheric strategy for the prevention of violence and crime through an integrated and complementary set of actions aimed at strengthening the capacity of Member States to act in a coordinated manner, fostering international cooperation.

RESULTS

The Program’s interventions are implemented in three areas: institutional, situational and community.

At the institutional level, it seeks to strengthen coordination among agencies working on violence and crime prevention, and to build capacity of public administrators, especially from the security, justice, health and education sectors.

In the situational context, the aim is to reduce criminal opportunities in urban spaces by improving areas for community coexistence and through interventions in premises that sell alcohol.

At the community level, it seeks to increase protective factors for violence in communities, particularly within vulnerable groups. Its particular focus is on youth: social empowerment, life skills development, and strengthening of links with their environment, especially school and family.
PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Department of Public Security (DPS) has created the Inter-American Network for Police Development and Professionalization as a mechanism for international cooperation to strengthen the police capacity to address security challenges. The Police Network seeks to generate police skills adapted to new security situations in the region and to promote the exchange of best practices and lessons learned. The structure of the Police Network is based on a needs-assessment carried out by DPS, with the support of AMERIPOL, which allowed the identification and understanding of the main challenges and knowledge gaps regarding police training.

The Interamerican Police Network is structured in four main pillars: (i) development and implementation of a training curriculum, with on-site courses and virtual courses, that seeks to answer the knowledge needs identified in the needs-assessment and to reduce the asymmetries among the police forces in the Americas; (ii) creation of a permanent network for cooperation with the goal of strengthening the training process through the continuous exchange of information and knowledge between police officers and the training institutions and instructors; (iii) horizontal cooperation that promotes the exchange of information, experiences, and best practices among police institutions; (iv) certification of police forces in excellence management.

The Interamerican Police Network has partnered with universities of the Hemisphere, coordinated by the University of São Paulo, with the goal of promoting the exchange between academic knowledge and police practices.

OBJECTIVES

To contribute in a systematic and ongoing manner to the strengthening of professional development of OAS Member States’ police institutions. Its specific goals are: (i) to develop a police knowledge management system based on on-site and virtual training; (ii) to promote a comprehensive and holistic approach that includes continuous training and exchange of knowledge and best practices among police institutions, as well as certification in police management; (iii) to generate greater coordination among Member States to address present and future public security challenges; and (iv) to add scientific value in the professional development of police officers through accreditation of the courses by renowned universities.

RESULTS

In the framework of the Interamerican Police Network, with the support of strategic partners, the DPS has carried out a needs assessment to identify the main challenges and gaps in police training; an educational guide for the on-site police training was developed based on the conclusions of the needs-assessment. The curriculum and the material for this training are being finalized and they will be validated by the strategic partners of the Police Network. Simultaneously, the first edition of the training is being organized and it is expected to take place at the Police Academy of Honduras in 2017. The DPS has also elaborated a mapping of the police institutions and their processes certified in quality management in the hemisphere.

It is expected that in the following years the Interamerican Police Network trains at least 340 police officers to promote the program in the OAS Member States during a one-month on site police course and 200,000 officers on the virtual platform, who will be connected through a network for police cooperation and exchange of experiences. The police network also aims to add scientific value in police professional development through accreditation of the courses offered by renowned universities and foster horizontal cooperation among police institutions in the Americas.
PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Maritime Security Program aims to assist Member States to comply with international maritime security standards and best practices as well as to improve their overall maritime security capabilities on a national and regional level. This is accomplished by training maritime/port security officials to protect passenger transportation and trade; strengthen port capabilities to comply with the ISPS (International Ship and Port Facility Security) Code and other international port security standards/procedures; and identifying the vulnerabilities to mitigate the potential consequences in key ports of the region both on a national and regional level. The Maritime Security Program has a three-phase activity programmed for Belize that focuses on assessing vulnerabilities and training needs in target ports and a follow-on training to mitigate vulnerabilities identified during the assessment process.

OBJECTIVES

Contribute to strengthening maritime/port security in Member States by identifying vulnerabilities and training needs through assessments, organizing workshops to prompt inter-agency and regional collaboration, and measuring the impact on the application of new strategies to improve maritime security overall in the Americas.

RESULTS

In conjunction with external experts, the program will lead a port assessment in a key port in Belize in order to identify vulnerabilities and key training areas, using the ISPS Code as a baseline to assess the plans, policies, and security procedures currently in place at the port based on a survey filled out by port personnel. After the evaluation of the initial survey, the team of experts conducts a technical visit to the port and proposes the corresponding training modules.

Follow-on Capacity Building Training based on the assessment conducted during the first phase of the project. A comprehensive training module will be given to port and maritime security personnel on a national level in order to mitigate vulnerabilities and ensure the proper adherence to the ISPS Code and other international regulations.

Final evaluation three to six months post capacity-building training to determine the successful adoption of whether the recommendations provided by the experts. This will be done by observing changes in policies, plans, and procedures, measuring the scope of the impact in the personnel and evaluating whether the overall port security has been bolstered.
PROGRAM SUMMARY

In 2016, the Tourism Security Program of CICTE started the execution of a three-year project, funded by the government of Canada, which aims to strengthen the capacities of 11 Member States from Central America and the Caribbean on risk management, tourism security plans and public-private partnerships within the stakeholders of tourism, national security and others.

Given that tourist destinations are by their own nature considered soft targets, this Program seeks to contribute to the strengthening of the capacities of strategic-level and operational-level public-private sector actors in the tourism industry. Furthermore, the Program aims to promote collaboration between the public and private sectors in the prevention and response to incidents that threaten the security of tourism.

In this regard, CICTE offered the government of Belize to perform a Needs Assessment and follow-up Workshop on Tourism Security for Belize City.

OBJECTIVES

This component of the Program included: a two-day Needs Assessment Mission, in preparation for the five-day Tourism Security Workshop. The objective was to contribute to strengthen the capacities on tourism security and safety and public-private partnerships.

These activities were carried out by staff from the OAS and UNICRI, along with subject-matter experts from the tourism industry and the international law enforcement community. Among the partner institutions that have attended the workshops were: Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), UNICRI, CARICOM, Hudson Trident, among others.

RESULTS

Among the results of these activities in Belize, relevant and precise information has been gathered on the vulnerabilities and threats to the specific destination, as well as the existing processes and level of coordination; and relevant partners and audiences were identified to participate in the follow-up Workshop.

Based on the outcomes of the Needs Assessment, the project team designed the agenda for the Workshop, targeted for professionals from specific audiences from the public and private sector. The Workshop was structured to systematically address issues faced by security managers who work in the respective tourism and recreational facilities. The course will also aim to promote greater partnerships between the public and private sector decision makers in the industry.

Approximately, 23 officers form the public sector (Police, Belize Tourism Board, Immigration, Firefighters, and Emergency Response bodies, among others) and the private sector (Fort Street Tourism Village, Audubon Belize, etc.) were trained. Specifically, 22 of them were men and 1 woman.
PROGRAM SUMMARY

Within the framework of the Central American Security Strategy (ESCA), and in particular the D.B.3 Project for “Strengthening Programs for the protection of victims, witnesses and other individuals involved in criminal investigations in Central America” and also in accordance with the priorities identified by countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Department of Public Security (DPS) of the OAS developed this initiative to strengthen the institutions specialized in assistance and protection of victims and witnesses.

This initiative aims at improving the capacities of the institutions responsible for providing assistance and protection services for victims and witnesses in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic, through work in five lines of action: (1) the joint identification of relevant mechanisms and procedures being applied in each country; (2) the elaboration of diagnostic reports of the standards, policies, programs, government institutions and civil society, responsible for the protection and assistance to victims and witnesses in each country; (3) the elaboration and implementation of an instrument (Manual or Protocol) that presents the best common approach for the subregion for the assistance and protection of victims and witnesses; (4) the training of national officials with relevant competencies on this matter; and (5) facilitating and documenting the horizontal exchange of experiences in assistance and protection of victims and witnesses among these countries.

OBJECTIVES

Strengthen the specialized institutions responsible for offering assistance and protection services to victims, witnesses, and other individuals involved in investigations or judicial proceedings so that they are able to provide a uniform, coordinated and efficient response; generate consensus among institutions; reduce bureaucratic processes; and improve the efficiency of the State to provide protection and assistance in a comprehensive, timely and specialized manner. At the same time, we support the implementation of the “Central American Convention for the protection of victims, witnesses, experts and other individuals involved in the investigation and criminal proceedings, particularly in drug trafficking and organized crime”.

RESULTS

Among the results achieved by this initiative, it is worth noting the elaboration of diagnostic reports of the standards, policies, programs, government institutions and civil society, responsible for the protection and assistance to victims and witnesses in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic; the development and validation of a "Manual for the assistance and protection of victims of crime in Central America" and a "Protocol for the implementation and operationalization of the Central American Convention for the protection of victims, witnesses, experts and other individuals involved in the investigation and criminal proceedings, particularly in drug trafficking and organized crime"; a proposal for the redesign and strengthening of Honduras’ Witness Protection Program (based on a technical horizontal exchange with counterparts from El Salvador); and the elaboration of a document/questionnaire with shared criteria for considering the profiles of candidates that could be eligible for protection and transfer to Guatemala and/or El Salvador, within the framework of the Central American Convention, as well as a list of the official documents that should accompany an official request of this nature.