

Inter-American Program for Strengthening Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies (GENLEA/CICAD)

"Creating a more effective and inclusive workforce to counter drug trafficking in the Americas"



BACKGROUND

Illicit drug production and trafficking are steadily on the rise in the Americas and, in spite of enormous efforts and resources devoted to counter them, drug markets appear to be expanding. Relying on a multidimensional, comprehensive, and evidence-based approach, the mission of the Supply Reduction Unit (SRU) of the Executive Secretariat (ES) of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD, by its Spanish language acronym) is to increase the capacity of the Organization of American States (OAS) member states to counter drug trafficking the production and trafficking of illicit drugs, and prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals used in their manufacture.

Gender mainstreaming has been an increasingly important factor of CICAD's programming. When it comes to supply reduction, mainstreaming a gender perspective in the counterdrug agencies of the Americas is of particular importance for two reasons: First, to comply with countries' commitments on the topic under international law. Second, it has been shown that enhancing gender equality has a positive impact on the performance of law enforcement agencies by increasing their effectiveness, transparency, and legitimacy.

THE GENLEA PROGRAM

Since January 2018, the CICAD/SRU has been executing the *Inter-American Program for Strengthening Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies* (GENLEA). This program aims to help OAS member states increase gender equality in counterdrug law enforcement agencies in order to strengthen their capacity to counter drug trafficking. It is financed by the Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program (ACCBP) of Global Affairs Canada, as part of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy.

Within the framework of the first phase of the GENLEA program, the ES-CICAD gathered and analyzed information on gender equality in the region's national counterdrug agencies by means of questionnaires, interviews, and on-site visits. National workshops were held in 2018 and 2019 in Argentina, Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, and Trinidad and Tobago, to allow for discussion among officials from the different counterdrug agencies, international specialists, and representatives of organizations working to promote gender equality and human rights. The *Regional Conference on Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies in the Americas*, held in San Jose, Costa Rica, in June 2019 addressed the challenges facing law enforcement agencies in strengthening equality, and identified good practices to deal with those challenges.

GENLEA HANDBOOK

The common challenges to increase gender equality in counterdrug agencies identified during the first phase of the GENLEA Program were grouped into four overall categories, as follows:



Imbalance in the proportion of male and female staff;



An organizational culture that is steeped in gender stereotypes;



Human resources policies that lack a gender perspective; and



Low percentage of women in leadership positions.

As a contribution to facing those challenges, the *GENLEA Handbook: Strategies and Good Practices for Strengthening Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies*, draws on the ideas, good practices, and proposals identified by the ES-CICAD within the first phase of the GENLEA Program.

More specifically, the Handbook offers strategies that OAS member states might consider in their efforts to achieving more inclusive and gender equitable law enforcement agencies to effectively counter drug trafficking, such as: setting up a gender mainstreaming unit; conducting a gender assessment or audit; developing a plan of action; and implementing a monitoring and evaluation system.

The GENLEA Handbook also compiles good practices for strengthening gender equality in counterdrug agencies, which include:



Good practices in attaining gender balance in such agencies by improving recruitment, selection, retention and integration, as well as promotion of personnel;



Good practices in fostering a non-discriminatory organizational culture through training, sensitization and awareness measures, visibility and recognition of the work carried out by women;



Good practices related to agency policies, maternity and paternity that could be implemented by the Department of Human Resources; as well as



Good practices in increasing female leadership within the agency, by creating mentoring programs and establishing associations and support networks.

The ES-CICAD will launch the GENLEA Handbook on the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (June 26, 2020).