EVALUATION BRIEF

INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATION OF

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICIES FOR IMPROVED COMMUNITY SAFETY IN LATIN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN CITIES; UNDA-2019-001
Colombia-Mexico-South Africa, March 2020

Region: Latin America and Africa.

Duration: June 2016-December 2019.

Donors: UNDA – UN DESA.

Evaluation team: Edgar Arredondo Casillas.

Full report:
https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports_year_2020.html

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

"Evidence-based policies for improved community safety in Latin American and African cities" is a joint technical assistance project implemented by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (Justice Section, Division for Operations, UNODC HQ Vienna; UNDOC Country Office in Colombia – COCOL; and, UNODC Liaison and Partnership Office in Mexico - LPOMEX) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (South Africa). Its main objective has been to enhance the capacities of local authorities in three selected cities – Querétaro in México, Santiago de Cali in Colombia and eThekwini (Durban) in South Africa – to collect and analyse data, to revise existing policies on crime prevention and safety and to develop monitoring frameworks, all in consultation with civil society. The Project was granted $801,000 USD for implementation but, due to its good results, additional funding of $200,000 USD was granted by the donor (UNDA – UN DESA), to extend its activities until December 2019.

MAIN FINDINGS

The project was aligned to the mandates and goals of UNODC and UN Habitat, contributing to the fulfilment of SDGs 16, 11, 3, 5 and 17. It was considered highly relevant and needed in each of the three cities where implemented. Its design enabled success in implementation. Some risks and conditions for success were not properly identified, but most of faced risks could be successfully mitigated.

Certain activities presented delays, but most activities and outcomes were completed before the end of the project: Audits, reviewed policies and monitoring frameworks were developed in each city intervened; there was only a delay in the establishment of the City Lab in eThekwini. The program was very effective: most of stakeholders considered it will have an impact in crime reduction, building more efficient, inclusive, accountable and

reliable security institutions, and that its results will be sustained. All local government officials reported increased capacities to a) collect and analyse data using a participatory approach; b) design or revise public policies based on evidence and c) monitor progress towards safety. The greatest perceived risk for sustainability comes from changes of city administrations. Partnerships and cooperation with local governments and civil society were very good, but Inter-Agency collaboration presented various challenges that prevented greater collaboration of both agencies within each of the beneficiary cities. Most stakeholders recognized Human Rights and Gender Equality were always respected, although some suggestions were made on how to improve inclusion of vulnerable and under-represented groups.
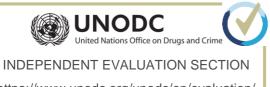
LESSONS LEARNED

There are five lessons learned. The two most important were: a) It is important to adjust the intervention to the electoral, legislative and administrative calendars of the municipal government so that all project activities are aligned with them and expected outcomes can be maximized; b) There is a need to address difficulties in inter-agency communication as soon as they arise, including through regular consultation at expert and management level, to solve all possible collaboration challenges as soon as possible.

GOOD PRACTICES

The two most important good practices identified were: a) The development of web tools as the Security Observatory in Cali and the Web portal of LPOMEX, for they both greatly increase the sustainability of the project's results, help integrate community participation and surveillance (increasing accountability), promote research and help monitor progress towards safety. b) Legislating to make Prevention Strategies based on the project's model is also a good practice, as was done in Querétaro.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach used was a contribution analysis, to centre on the fulfilment of outputs, outcomes and the general objective of the project, considering also the influence of internal and external factors, assumptions and risks. A mixed-methods approach of collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data was used. All information analysed was evidence-based and triangulated, using a gender-responsive and human-rights-based approach.

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SECTION

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Sustainability and Impact:** Support counterparts to make the achievements of the project sustainable with ideas that can help transit towards the institutionalization of the governance guidelines implicit in the project's objectives.

2. **Inter-Agency Collaboration**: Ensure closer collaboration between the two agencies and focus more on field implementation.

3. **Civil Society Participation**: Expand community and civil society participation to other relevant stages and activities of the project.

4. **Technical Assistance and Capacity Building:** Undertake capacity building and training courses at the local level of government with sustainable method for continuous capacitation. Develop a tool for enabling a constant exchange in between cities.

5. **Efficiency**: Plan beforehand the whole project in more detail to improve efficiency of the intervention – i.e., in terms of the time and specific resources needed by each activity and outcome, aligning these activities to municipal administrative times, involving civil society participation in all stages, etc.

6. **Audit Guide:** Improve the Audit Guide and make it an instrument (a method) to guide the whole process of implementation.

7. **Log Frame and Monitoring**: Formulate a Theory of Change, develop a more detailed set of indicators and include a long-term strategy to monitor impact and to try to ensure sustainability.

8. **Inclusion and Gender Equality**: Incorporate aspects of gender equality and inclusion into the whole process of implementation.