In recent years, governments throughout the Latin America and Caribbean Region have begun to recognize the seriousness of the problems stemming from crime and violence. Their demands for technical expertise, innovation, and concrete action have stimulated us to respond with a series of integrated, multi-sectoral, and inter-disciplinary activities. While we have provided a range of creative policy and investment responses, we recognize that we are still a long way from being able to provide complete solutions. Instead, we are seeking to take advantage of ongoing and currently planned infrastructure and social investments, and to integrate national and local crime and violence prevention measures into these programs.

This Status Report presents an overview of the activities and innovations carried out so far - and which will be carried out in the near future - as part of the Bank’s Crime and Violence agenda in LAC. We hope that you will find this Report informative and useful and that it will spur ideas on how to work together on this critical issue affecting our region.

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Why should the Bank engage in crime and violence prevention?

The economic costs of crime and violence (such as costs to the judicial system, health care costs, foregone earnings, costs on private security, and loss of competitiveness) are extremely high. By some estimates, the region loses up to 14% of its GDP to violence (Guerrero, 1999). Recent Investment Climate Assessments (ICAs) also consistently put crime and violence as one of the top barriers to business development around the region. The high level and pervasiveness of crime and violence found in LAC today -- combined with the social and economic costs that high levels of crime and violence impose on countries -- has made it increasingly clear that crime and violence have become a development issue, and as such, cannot be ignored by the Bank. Although crime and violence is not an area where the Bank has traditionally been actively involved, since the articles of agreement do not allow for financing of police or military, a paradigm shift towards complementing criminal justice approaches with prevention approaches has led to a reexamination of potential Bank engagement in the prevention of crime and violence.

How did the Crime & Violence Prevention Program come about?

In 2003, the Sustainable Development (SD) Department (formerly the Finance and Private Sector Infrastructure Department) launched the Program with initial support from the Bank Netherlands Partnership Program (BNPP) and the Department for International Development (DFID), in response to the increased client demand for assistance in developing strategies and programs to reduce and prevent crime and violence in their countries. Most recently, the Program has also received seed funding from the SD Department and from the President’s Contingency Fund to grow the Program.

Crime and Violence in LAC: An Overview

With homicide rates reaching 36 per 100,000 -- compared to a world average of 11 per 100,000 (WHO, 2003) -- Latin America and the Caribbean is categorized as the most violent region in the world. Over the last few decades, crime and violence have become serious economic and social problems in many countries in the LAC region, particularly in poor urban areas. Average rates mask rural/urban difference as well as intra-city and intra-group differences - some slums/neighborhoods can have homicide rates of 200 or more and among young men aged 16-24 homicide rates can be even higher in certain violent communities. (World Bank, 2004). Youth -- and young men in particular -- are disproportionately involved in violence as both victims and perpetrators. Not only is youth homicide a significant problem around the region, but levels of aggression, bullying, abuse, and domestic violence are also of serious concern. (World Bank, 2005). The high levels of crime and violence that currently exist in the LAC region can be attributed to a complex set of factors, including rapid urbanization, persistent poverty and inequality, social exclusion, political violence, organized crime, post-conflict cultures, the emergence of illegal drug use and drug trafficking, and authoritarian family structures, among others.

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**What is the Urban Crime and Violence Prevention Program Approach?**

Experiences from the U.S., Europe, and increasingly from Latin America and the Caribbean itself, have shown that crime and violence can be substantially reduced through well-planned prevention strategies that go beyond traditional police responses – especially at the local level. Our Program takes a municipal/urban renewal approach, by promoting local preventive strategies that seek to develop or strengthen stand-alone municipal C&V prevention strategies as well as C&V prevention components in World Bank-facilitated urban projects. In these components, particular importance is paid to the synergies between infrastructure, urban upgrading, situational prevention, and community-based social prevention activities. Our ultimate goal is to achieve a comprehensive intervention at the neighborhood level that is coordinated with relevant municipal, government, and non-government programs addressing crime and violence and their causes.

**What are our Program’s components?**

The LAC C&V Prevention Program consists of four components:

**Analytical Work:** To date, SD and PREM have jointly published two reports on crime and violence in the region, focusing on Brazil (2006) and the Caribbean (2007). Both reports attempt to identify promising policy responses to reduce levels of crime and violence. Recent Investment Climate Assessments (ICAs) have included a focus on the impact of C&V, as have Poverty Assessments for Nicaragua, Jamaica, and Guatemala FY-08 (PREM), the Haiti Country Social Analysis, the Youth study in Argentina, as well as the Peace and Development Project and accompanying ongoing Programmatic ESW in Colombia (SD). In addition, there is a TF-ESSD funded impact evaluation of youth violence prevention projects in Jamaica to identify successful approaches in the Caribbean, as well as an at-risk-youth policy toolkit that includes youth violence prevention strategies (HD).

When looking for artwork for the ESW on the Caribbean, the World Bank team came up with the idea of carrying out a *poster competition* in Jamaica on the theme of “How violence impacts my daily life.” “We thought the competition would be a good way to produce an attractive and original
cover for the book and to give the Jones Town children a chance to express how they feel about the violence they see in their daily lives,” said Bernice Van Bronkhorst. Many of the posters depict young men either killing each other or killing innocent bystanders. A picture by 12-year-old Samantha Hall, called “Stray Shot,” (right) was one of the entries in the competition. Children from grades 1-3 (ages 6-9) and 4-6 (ages 10-12) participated in the competition.

**Operational Work:** SD is operationalizing crime and violence prevention methodologies in Bank-financed urban operations through the development of Crime and Violence Prevention components in existing Urban Projects such as Viver Melhor II (Bahia Brazil), Barrio-Ciudad (Honduras), and the Inner Cities Basic Services Project (Jamaica). We are also currently developing violence prevention components in projects under preparation in Colombia, Ecuador, and Haiti. These components do not intend to solve countries’ overall crime and violence problems, rather they seek to take advantage of the infrastructure and social investments taking place and mainstream prevention at the local level into the overall projects.

Crime and violence prevention components focus specifically on the reduction of the very high levels of homicide, youth violence, and associated risk factors in targeted neighborhoods. These projects by their very nature are usually situated in the poorest and most marginalized communities and there often is a high correlation between the most vulnerable and the most crime-ridden and violent communities. Crime and violence prevention components typically include six subcomponents:

- **Diagnostics:** Crime and violence mapping of the micro areas using police statistics and, where possible, GIS systems; victimization section in baseline surveys, willingness-to-pay for increased safety, and community-based and situational diagnostics.

- **Situational prevention:** Measures that reduce opportunities for crime and violence through spatial interventions, such as the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) methodology and urban renewal. This method is mainstreamed in the infrastructure works of projects through the training of architects, engineers, and other technical staff. This methodology is very new in Latin America but has been successfully piloted in Chile and in the Bank-financed PROMETROPOLE project in Pernambuco, Brazil.

*Figure 1. Example of a street which incorporates CPTED methodology*
• Capacity-building, training and technical assistance: in multi-sectoral crime and violence prevention strategies to participating government agencies, municipalities, and community-based organizations.

• Complementary investments and activities: Neighborhood residents work with partner agencies and technical staff of the project to develop a plan for C&V prevention and use these funds to implement the prioritized subprojects and community programs that are not already covered by one of the other project programs or partner programs. Examples of activities include: social infrastructure investments – such as recreation centers, community facilities, and public lighting not financed through the infrastructure works components, and social prevention activities – such as life skills, job skills, parenting skills, and conflict resolution training, homework clubs, sports and arts-based recreational activities, victim support, and domestic violence prevention.

• Community Organizers: The role of these technical experts in community organization and crime and violence prevention is - at the neighborhood level - to: carry out community-based diagnostics; formulate participatory community safety plans and strategies; liaise and coordinate with other relevant agencies and associations, in particular with Community Safety Councils and the Police; coordinate closely with those in charge of infrastructure to ensure integration of CPTED principles; identify and work with youth at risk in the community; organize and mobilize the community around the concept of safety through community campaigns (e.g. community clean-up, painting days, community safety festival, etc.); and initiate additional projects such as summer camp for at-risk youth.

• Monitoring and Evaluation component: Evaluations of the crime and violence prevention components have been designed and will be carried out in collaboration with the Urban Anchor and DECRG using advanced sampling and evaluation methodologies including the use of control groups in Bahia and Jamaica. While we have as yet no data from these Bank-financed projects, a few similar community-based integrated interventions have yielded dramatic results. The ‘Fica Vivo’ program in the Morro das Pedras favela in Belo Horizonte, Brazil resulted in a 45 percent reduction in homicide rates in its first year.

In addition, the Social Development unit has a long engagement with the “peace pillar” in Colombia. Current work includes: The Peace and Development Project in Colombia, which aims to reduce the vulnerability of the poor population in five conflict-affected regions of Colombia. The project also helps to reduce the vulnerability of families and communities to violence and poverty and to create conditions for peaceful coexistence within priority regions of the country. The project assumes that building assets is a measure that contributes to mitigating the risk of displacement and that restoring a basic safety net to displaced families is a first step in their social and economic stabilization.

Municipal Capacity-Building Program: SD has developed a multi-sectoral C&V prevention training course for municipal officials through the use of traditional municipal responsibilities such as housing, transport, parks and recreation, education, social development, and enforcement of local by-laws. The training includes the following themes: C&V diagnostics; strategy and partnership development; local crime and violence prevention partnerships and the design of prevention strategies; situational prevention; youth violence; gender-based violence; community and problem solving policing methods; monitoring and evaluation; and school-based violence preven-
tion. This course has been delivered to municipal officials in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Brazil, Mexico, and Jamaica and will soon be available in an e-learning format through collaboration with the World Bank Institute.

**Small Grants Program (SGP) – 2005 to 2007:** With the help of US$250,000 of a BNPP Trust Fund, the SGP was designed to provide early stage seed-funding (US$5,000 -10,000) to innovative community-based initiatives to build community and government capacity in finding effective ways to prevent urban crime and violence in Honduras and Nicaragua. 11 projects were selected on the basis of promoting: a preventive focus, innovative approach, community empowerment, replicability and leverage, learning and knowledge sharing and benefiting the most vulnerable and affected by violence in urban areas.

What does theater have to do with C&V prevention? On April 18th, 2007 a wide audience, including Bank Staff, attended the presentation of our Small Grant project: AMANECERES, consisting of two short theater pieces. Honduran students from Instituto Saul Zelaya Jimenez and Dowal School performed under the Direction of Teatro Laboratorio de Honduras (TELAH) and Tito Estrada. The theater pieces were intended to promote dialogue among the different social groups and their perception of violence.

**Impact Evaluations:** Lack of hard data regarding what works and what does not in citizen security strategies, constitutes a major challenge when it comes to developing effective evidence-based C&V prevention policies. One of the main objectives of the pilot Small Grants Program in Nicaragua and Honduras, was to evaluate the impact of some of the winning projects. For this purpose, our Program developed surveys that measure self-reporting of victimization and aggressive behaviors on key issues such as gang membership, alcohol and drug consumption, arms bearing and intra-family violence. Currently 4 projects are undergoing impact evaluations: 3 school-based violence prevention projects and 1 gang reinserction project. Even taking into account the many challenges faced during baseline and ex-post survey implementation, some of the initial results show a decrease in violent behavior among target members, increased awareness of different manifestations of violence, increased knowledge of risk factors of crime and violence, and successful multisectoral alliances to prevent C&V.

![Picture 1 (Left): Managua’s municipal open dump, located next to Escuela La Esperanza, where we carried out one of our impact evaluations of the project “Promoviendo la Convivencia y Negociación de Conflictos en las escuelas con la participación de niñas, niños y adolescentes” implemented by the NGO Dos Generaciones.](image-url)
Who are our counterparts?

Having municipalities as an operational entry point allows us to work in slum areas, where 32% of LAC’s urban population lives and where crime and violence are usually most acute and go hand-in-hand with limited access to basic services and transportation networks, substandard housing, insecure land tenure arrangements, environmental degradation and severe social problems, including unemployment, among others.

Who are our partners?

By joining forces with the Inter-American Coalition for Crime and Violence Prevention-IACPV- (composed of PAHO, IDB, CDC, WOLA, OAS, USAID and UNESCO) we are promoting the implementation of comprehensive strategies for crime and violence reduction, which are based on prevention, education and social capital-building. Other partnerships include academic research institutes, international agencies, national agencies and a variety of civil society institutions (among others Corporacion CPTED Region LAC) with vast experience in crime and violence prevention. Our Program is also a founding partner of the Nucleo de Referencia de Seguranca Publica (UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme, IDB, Frente Nacional de Prefeitos, Brazil).
**Upcoming Work**

- Analytical work on “Crime and Violence in Central America” (jointly with PREM, to be published in FY 09).

- **School-based Violence Prevention Manual**, which will include strategies and models for school-based violence prevention programs, will be published in mid-2008. This Manual will also include a companion Manual on Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), specifically developed for school environments.

- **Haiti Urban Community Driven Development (CDD) project**: An Urban Community Driven Development (CDD) Project, which will provide funds directly to community-based organizations for the execution of subprojects in basic socioeconomic infrastructure and productive projects in slums within four cities in Haiti, is expected to be approved in FY 08.

- **Haiti Slum Upgrading Strategy**: As a complement to the urban CDD project, we are also working with UN Habitat and Cities Alliance to address the medium and long-term urban challenges facing Haiti by preparing a national slum upgrading strategy for the country, which would promote the coordination and strategic planning of diverse existing initiatives and ensure the capacity building of implementing agencies.

- **Additional Municipal Capacity Building Courses** in Costa Rica, Mexico, Honduras, Guyana, and possibly in the Andean countries. Starting in April, 2008 this course will be available online through a collaboration with the World Bank Institute (WBI).

- **Develop a holistic ‘Public Safety’ Methodology** that incorporates safe transport, hazard risk management, and C&V prevention principles and activities to address urban risks. SD currently has a US$1 million Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) grant to pilot this in Quito, Ecuador.

- **Develop the SD Violence and Development Beam** that identifies linkages and a common toolkit for interventions spanning the violence continuum, from political violence, to criminal and gang violence, to gender-based and intra-family violence.

- **Preparation of a Regional Strategy to Address Crime and Violence Prevention**, with particular focus on those countries with visibly distressed communities and eroding social capital. Such a strategy would be based on the diagnosis and issues identified in the work done so far as well as in the work carried out by other institutions, and would aim at identifying means to deepen our knowledge/intervention and assistance to help countries and local governments to deal with the above mentioned issues, streamlining best practice experiences, disseminating well tested approaches and reaching out to many complementary sectors who have a clear mandate in the area of fighting Crime and Violence and in building social capital.
If you have any questions, or would like to receive any additional information, please contact Bernice Van Bronkhorst (bvanbronkhorst@worldbank.org) or Lorena Cohan (lcohan@worldbank.org). You can also visit our website: www.worldbank.org/lacurban.

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