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INTERNATIONAL  
CENTRE  
FOR THE  
PREVENTION  
OF CRIME

CENTRE  
INTERNATIONAL  
POUR LA  
PRÉVENTION  
DE LA CRIMINALITÉ

CENTRO  
INTERNACIONAL  
PARA LA  
PREVENCIÓN  
DE LA CRIMINALIDAD

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**CRIME**

**PREVENTION**

**AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**INTERNATIONAL REPORT**

**2012**



The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime's *2012 International Report on Crime Prevention and Community Safety* analyzes current and relevant topics in crime, to develop ways in which crime prevention can contribute to social cohesion and resilient communities.

Produced every two years, this third edition of the Report focuses on five topics of significance for crime prevention policymaking at the international level: Human Trafficking, Informal Settlements, Post-Conflict and Post-Disaster Areas, Drug Production in Developed Countries and ICPC's own Global Survey on Safety in Cities. The Report is also enriched by a number of Special Contributions from experts and practitioners, who bring their particular view of the issues raised in the Report, as well as Case Studies that provide original research on ongoing challenges and existing international prevention practices.

The *International Report* provides information and tools to help governments, local authorities, international organizations and other actors implement successful crime prevention policies in their countries or cities. Thus the *International Report on Crime Prevention and Community Safety* asserts itself as a crucial tool in the design and implementation of safety and prevention policies.

## INTRODUCTION AND CRIME OVERVIEW

# 1 A Rights-Based Approach to Crime Prevention: Overview of ICPC's Work

Crime prevention and community safety entail a wide variety of principles that aim to promote the values of equality, education, freedom from persecution, and many other rights to which individuals as well as communities are entitled. Chapter One presents the framework and principles in which ICPC places crime prevention as well as key concepts used throughout the Report. It defines crime prevention in a broad sense as including developmental, social, situational and recidivism prevention. It outlines the key notions as well as the conceptual basis of the UN's Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, all of which form the essence of ICPC's work. Thus ICPC understands crime prevention as a series of actions that (UNODC/ICPC 2011):

- *Promote the well-being of people and encourage positive behaviour through social, economic, health and educational measures, with a particular emphasis on children youth and women, and focus on the risk and protective factors associated with crime and victimization.*
- *Change the conditions in neighbourhoods that influence offending, victimization, and the insecurity that results from crime by building on the initiatives, expertise and commitment of community members.*
- *Prevent the occurrences of crime by reducing opportunities, increasing risk of being apprehended and minimizing benefits, including through environmental design, and by providing assistance and information to potential and actual victims.*
- *Prevent recidivism by assisting the social reintegration of offenders and other preventive mechanisms.*
- *Include a wide range of actors such as police forces, courts and civil society in the development of crime prevention policy.*

## 2 Crime Overview and Trends to Watch: Challenges for Crime Prevention

Crime rates and perceptions of insecurity fluctuate constantly. In an ever more connected world, the behaviour of crime and policy in one region of the world can have worldwide effects. Policymakers are more pressed than ever to deal with issues of local and transnational crime by their constituents as new challenges emerge to contest current policy. Chapter Two explores current debates on crime as a way to contextualize the analytical parts of the *2012 International Report*. It addresses the puzzling decrease in crime rates that the developed world (especially the US) has seen in the last 20 years and finds that there is an ongoing debate in the literature as to the factors that determine this decrease, such as better policing, immigration, social development in urban areas and higher rates of incarceration. On this last factor Chapter Two explores the debate on whether higher incarceration rates actually contribute to the decrease of crime rates. Current research agrees that, while high incarceration rates are correlated to drops in crime, it is not clear whether they have actually caused it. Indeed, available evidence suggests that initially an increase in prison sentences may result in lower crime rates but this ceases to be so after incarceration continues to increase, suggesting that it has a short lived effect. It is also clear that decreases in crime rates will still occur regardless of correctional policy and due to other factors such as better policing and social development.

A good measure of crime rates is the homicide rate and the available literature on it suggests that globally trends in homicide are varied. While Western Europe, North America (the US and Canada) and Oceania have seen varying degrees of decreases in their homicide rates, Central America and Sub-Saharan Africa have seen significant increases in their rates. Central America is a region that has been especially affected by this escalation. This change is accounted for by shifts in the drug trade and its flows, the growing presence of drug trafficking gangs, regional structural disadvantages and overtly coercive government responses. These scenarios present a challenge for crime prevention which is underlined by the need to produce better and diverse data on crime to better inform policy responses. In addition, Chapter Two highlights two trends to watch in the near future, namely counterfeit medications—an illicit activity that kills close to 700,000 people in Africa alone yearly—and crime in public transport, where innovations in crime prevention from Mexico City to Japan are proving that they can contribute to a better living experience for dwellers of mega-cities.

## CRIME PREVENTION IN DIFFERENT AND CHALLENGING SETTINGS

The 2012 edition of the *International Report* underscores the importance and impact of crime prevention in a variety of challenging settings that impact the lives of millions of people worldwide, using actual contexts (Post-Conflict and Post-Disaster areas and Informal Settlements) and illicit activities (Human Trafficking and Drug Production).

### 3 Human Trafficking and Exploitation: The New Faces of Slavery from a Prevention Perspective

Human Trafficking and exploitation are crimes that affect millions of people all over the world. In this context, it has become a priority on the agenda of many governments and organizations. Chapter Three tracks the evolution of the phenomena by researching national laws and national action plans in human trafficking for all countries in the world. The research has shown important results. National level laws are common. Out of 193 countries, 140 were found to have some form of national legislation that addresses this issue. Chapter Three also identifies National Action plans in at least 80 countries. Those countries that have developed national action plans do tend to include in them various levels of prevention, mostly in the form of social/community based programmes as well as developmental programmes. The links between human trafficking and exploitation (in cases such as slavery, debt bondage or labour exploitation) are highlighted throughout the chapter as two faces of the same coin. This chapter is illustrated by two national case studies, Ukraine and Peru, two countries that have made substantial advances in preventing human trafficking within their national policies.

### 4 Informal Settlements: Spaces Full of Possibilities for Community Safety Approaches

A billion people live in informal settlements and slums in the world. While these communities have enormous potential, crime and violence have frequently hampered their development and their acquisition of full citizenship rights. Chapter Four explores the hugely diverse of ways in which these communities have worked to prevent crime and violence. High crime rates in these settlements are often determined by unemployment, discrimination, lack of access to rights and family-related problems such as substance abuse. Issues of disenfranchisement are common and many of the inhabitants of these

areas have low access to citizenship rights and social services common to the rest of the population. There exist many potential strategies for tackling crime in informal settlements. Examples from Chapter Four highlight the absolute need for a number of factors to be present in order to create successful local programmes:

- Programmes must be inclusive of all actors; unilateral decisions and strategies are not always conducive to successful scenarios;
- A long-term view and commitment from all actors that moves beyond political time-frames is an important tool for the implementation of programmes that effectively strengthen the community;
- The provision of rights such as health and education as well as land rights can be concurrent with local, mid-term solutions such as urban upgrading and community building exercises and both spectrums contribute to peaceful and resilient communities.

The presence of these factors can result in better and more successful policies. Case studies include South Africa and Brazil and focus on two innovative urban safety programmes in those countries.



## Post-Conflict and Post-Disaster Areas: Crime Prevention as a Positive Way to Create a Peaceful Environment

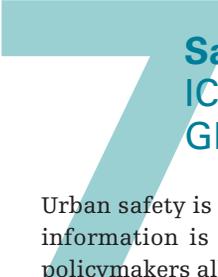
Post-conflict and post-disaster areas present some of the most challenging contexts in terms of safety and security. In the aftermath of a conflict, establishing a minimum of security is paramount for the success of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) processes. Crime and violence has been shown in many cases to increase in the period following a natural disaster such as an earthquake or a flood. Chapter Five explores the potential for crime prevention in these sensitive contexts. Crime prevention and community safety are not concepts easily found in post-conflict and post-disaster interventions today. While recognising the immense difficulties that first responders, governments, international organisations and other actors face in the process of DDR and post-conflict state building or in responding to a natural disaster, there is indeed a place and need for crime prevention in these contexts. Based on the notion that safety is one of the first goals and a precondition to peace and development, Chapter Five shows how crime prevention can offer strategies by which communities may achieve higher levels of safety both at the onset of the intervention and as a long term strategy in physical reconstruction or post-conflict state building. The cases of Haiti and Mozambique are used to illustrate the potential and challenges for crime prevention in these contexts.



## Drug Production in Developed Countries: Challenges to Local Safety

Developed countries have been emerging as leading producers and exporters of certain illicit drugs worldwide, namely cannabis and synthetic drugs such as ecstasy and amphetamines. Chapter Six addresses the number of possible negative consequences of this trend on community safety. First, the presence of drugs in a community (whether for production or consumption) can have a negative impact on the population. This may manifest itself as crime related to the production of drugs such as the presence of gangs, as well as through health factors derived from local consumption. Second, this activity opens the door to the insertion into the community of larger organized crime groups seeking to profit from the drug market. Thus, identifying at-risk populations and implementing preventive early interventions to avoid the insertion of drug production into a community can have positive effects.

Furthermore prevention is helpful in finding pertinent strategies for communities already affected by this illegal activity to tackle victimisation. On the other hand there are high costs in the public health arena associated with the presence of drugs in a community. Drug production may be local, serving only local markets when production is low. However as production increases and surplus production is achieved, it may become part of transnational networks of drug trafficking, extending its impact beyond the local community. The transnational drug trade fuels large networks of illegal activity in production, transit and consumer countries and is also connected to other types of crime such as human trafficking, extortion and corruption. Chapter Six explores how all of this can seriously harm social cohesion within communities and lead to low levels of trust, high crime rates and a decline in the quality of life of the community. Canada is explored as the case study in this chapter, highlighting local issues as well as programmes used to tackle the problem of internal drug markets.



## Safety in Cities: ICPC's 2011 Global Survey

Urban safety is a central subject to cities around the world. Precise and useful information is needed to respond to the safety needs of communities and policymakers all over the world. In an attempt to gather information on the role and action of local authorities in crime prevention and community safety in a systematic manner, Chapter Seven presents the results of the very first Global Survey on Safety in Cities, an ICPC initiative to generate solid and detailed information on actual local prevention programmes worldwide. This chapter analyses issues such as the prevalence of crime prevention programmes at the city level, the budgets for these programmes, whether or not these are evaluated, and who finances them, as well as giving specific details about the programmes themselves, such as which types of crimes they tackle. Information is also included about important issues in cities such as drugs, gangs and armed violence. The Survey is a significant step within long-standing efforts to support crime prevention with solid and reliable data. Overall, this chapter offers a detailed glimpse of the possibilities and potential of a worldwide crime prevention database.

## KEY MESSAGES OF THE INTERNATIONAL REPORT

- Safety should be understood as a right to which communities and citizens are entitled. As such, it provides a framework of action for governments and any actors involved in procuring this vital public good.
- If it is understood that safety is a public good, cooperation and partnership between actors (public, private and civil society) is more important than ever in order to sustain healthy communities, especially in times of financial uncertainty.
- Although not always a priority in contexts of conflict and natural disasters, safety and crime prevention are vital ingredients for successful interventions and hold enormous potential when properly implemented in these areas, helping tackle feelings of insecurity exacerbated by the crisis as well as generating long-term safer communities.
- Processes of urbanization have resulted in a majority of people living in cities today; in this context, urban crime can affect large numbers of people and has become one of the most important challenges for policymakers at all levels, especially for city governments.
- Improving living standards in informal urban settlements, coupled with overall efforts in crime prevention can contribute significantly to making cities more secure but this effect is only achievable when implemented as part of a global strategy.
- The design and implementation of National Action Plans that include prevention as a key ingredient is a positive step forward in preventing and combatting human trafficking and exploitation.
- Investment at the community level can contribute to building resilient communities, where crime prevention interventions have a greater chance of success when it comes to avoiding the presence and settlement of drug producers and traffickers.
- Developed countries need to include prevention strategies in their drug policies as a way to address the growing issue of internal drug production, especially cannabis and methamphetamines and other related synthetic drugs such as MDMA, and as a way of tackling demand for narcotics.
- Crime and the fear of crime appear to be an important concern even in settings and countries where crime rates have decreased. In this context, although crime prevention is increasing its presence in the safety agenda of many countries, it is still not a central policy ingredient alongside criminal justice policies and programmes.
- There is a general lack of evaluation of safety and security programmes that needs to be addressed in the near future. Evidence should be at the centre of any policymaking process and cost benefit analyses can contribute to advance the crime prevention agenda.



***The 2012 International Report on Crime Prevention  
and Community Safety***

will be available in May on the ICPC Website  
[www.crime-prevention-intl.org](http://www.crime-prevention-intl.org)

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