

# ICPC's 15th Anniversary: Crime Prevention across the World: Taking Stock, Evaluation and Future Perspectives

## ---- MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS ---

The event allowed ICPC to formulate precise recommendations in keeping with the topics brought up in the different sessions and workshops.



### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Workshop 1

On the topic of **Local Action and Community Mobilization**, all the presentations underlined the importance of youth participation through the development of social, cultural and recreational programmes as a means to increase their involvement into the community. Lack of trust and interaction between communities and local authorities was noted as the major obstacle to mobilizing communities. Recommendations were made on working to increase perception of safety and collective advocacy with a greater engagement of law enforcement authorities through the adoption of a partnership approach to policing.

As for **social mediation**, presenters in the session said that there is great need for acknowledging social mediation as an integral part of crime prevention strategies. At present, social mediation programs are not sufficiently recognized by local authorities. Participants also suggested the need to reinforce the training, supervision and development of this practice. To do so, the professionalization of mediation would be one avenue to explore. Finally, a recommendation was made for the need to document experiences, develop exchanges at the international level, and develop evaluation tools and indicators on strengthening social cohesion to measure the effects and impact of social mediation approaches.

#### Workshop 3

Concerning **tools in crime prevention**, workshop participants expressed the need to be made more aware of the tools that are currently available in order to improve urban safety. Emphasis was placed on the necessity of sharing leadership among different partners in cities, and ending centralization processes in order to achieve a higher level of effectiveness by reinforcing the powers of decentralized echelons.

#### Workshop 4

The workshop devoted to **evaluation** attracted a large number of participants, given how insufficient its implementation in prevention still seems. Participants recalled that it was

necessary to conduct more evaluations of prevention policies and practices. The need for diversifying methods and approaches and adapting to financial constraints was also emphasized.

### **Workshop 5**

Regarding **public/private partnerships**, presenters discussed the conditions for success in such partnerships. Taking as an example three distinct projects taking place in three different countries, it was possible to identify successful conditions: making companies aware of integrating a prevention/security aspect in their strategy; the training of local actors to be able to establish partnerships; the assurance, for companies, of obtaining tangible results; and training personnel in notions of prevention and security were also identified

### **Workshop 6**

The exchanges devoted to **urbanization and crime** described the problems of segregation and lack of confidence among the population towards the police. It was therefore proposed to take this into consideration, during the development of all policies or strategies, and urban development plans, while involving several partners coming from different backgrounds (e.g., police, community organizations, institutional settings, etc.) in order to show to advantage the innovative preventive action brings to each partner. To achieve this, several resources must be made available, since prevention programs alone are not sufficient for the task.

### **Workshop 7**

The focus on **peacekeeping missions** and the organizations that carry out these activities must be more sensitive to the social, economic and political context in which they intervene. They must also inspire trust in citizens. The presenters also called for better coordination of resources deployed during peace keeping missions.

Finally, it was recommended that peace keepers act in an inclusive manner, and to ensure measures to engage young people in decision-making, especially in post-conflict societies.

### **Workshop 8**

A focus was on **new actors in prevention**, and participants stressed the importance of continuously developing partnerships that adapt to emerging safety threats, and assess needs to develop appropriate interventions in response to them. Emphasis was also placed on the necessity of working more closely and systematically with researchers, citizens, human rights advocates and defenders and civil societies.

### **Workshop 9**

Regarding **new practices**, participants noted that prevention policies must be based on empirical data having a multidisciplinary orientation, benefiting from the support of various sectors and able to carry out a rigorous evaluation of the results. A recommendation was made, calling for reform of national laws in order to develop an overall alternative to incarceration, which results not only in over-populated prisons but also in considerable social damage and costs. Furthermore, it appears necessary to better adapt public policies to new situations such as specific violence that occurs in border areas or the reconstruction of police forces and their integration of preventive objectives in post conflict countries, having experienced police forces that were less than democratic.

## **Workshop 10**

When broaching the topic of **Human Rights**, the important role played by international standards and conventions in setting a framework to protect vulnerable and marginalized populations was underscored. However, promoting human rights and achieving the protection of socially excluded populations has been difficult to achieve in numerous countries mostly due to a lack of political will to respond to the issue. Consequently, a need for stronger efforts to deliver messages to politicians and to mobilize adequate resources was mentioned. The inclusion of Crime prevention as part of human rights policies is recommended, as crime prevention is also a strategy to protect and empower local communities.

## **Workshop 11**

Stephen Leafloor, founder of Blue Print for Life; a group that engages Aboriginal youth in using hip-hop as a medium for healing and empowerment. The group uses traditional culture (dance, throat singing and sport) infused with hip-hop, to teach young Aboriginal youth on building leadership and teamwork skills, to redirect energy and engage in social change, and build respect, confidence and appreciation for their cultural heritage. This initiative is highly innovative and sustainable, whereby young participants transfer their knowledge and skills to their elders, thus impacting on the entire community (intergenerational effect), as well as other communities. In this case, engaging and helping vulnerable youth requires practice and action-oriented initiatives that include sport, dance and song, which should also be culturally appropriate and sensitive. Furthermore, smaller-scale initiatives are more effective in such communities (i.e. Aboriginal), and should include intergenerational links by strengthening ties between young people and adults in order to help the community as a whole, and provide effective and sustainable results.

## **“Tools in Latin America” Workshop**

Organized to respond more specifically to the context of Latin-America, including various partner`s needs of tools and reference material to help better guide them in implementing prevention strategies, this workshop allowed for presenting different practical tools in greater detail. ICPC’s adapted toolkit, the “Key for Safer Municipalities in Latin America” was, presented by Esteban Benavides. *The Implementation of Municipal Prevention Plans in Chile* was presented by M. Jorge Araya, Director of the Public Security Division of Chile’s Ministry of the Interior. *A Diagnosis of Needs as Regards Crime Prevention in Mexico*, was presented by Verónica Martínez Solares, founder of the CLAVE organization, *The Development of a Tool for Diagnosing Vulnerabilities Linked to the Presence of Organized Crime in Colombia and Nicaragua*, was presented by Elkin Velázquez, coordinator of UN-Habitat “Safer Cities” program. The report of this session was written by Ana Maria Diaz, specialist in public security of the Organization of American States (OAS).

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, Valérie Sagant emphasized that new themes must be explored in a joint, preventive perspective to respond to the evolutions in crime and citizens’ expectations. **Organized crime** now constitutes a major challenge in many countries. This includes not only the transnational and world economic level, but also includes local impact, in different communities where it takes root, recruits young members, or unloads its illicit products.

Organized crime also reinforces and feeds the corruption of public authorities, which, as we know, provokes great citizen distrust of institutions.

This lack of trust represents a near-insurmountable obstacle for preventing and fighting crime and fuelling feelings of insecurity in general. This is one of the themes examined in the *International Report on Crime Prevention and Community Safety: Trends and Perspectives*, which the ICPC will publish in 2010.

Secondly, **the situation in fragile States and countries getting over international or civil conflicts** also is a challenge. In these situations, attention is often given in priority to the (re)construction of institutions, maintaining order and the reinforcement of national and central capacities. Without denying that these are necessities, it now seems essential for us to better take into account the local situations and capabilities of local players to help contribute to community safety. For the past few decades, the proven tools of partnership and co-production of security, neighbourhoods have demonstrated their possible adaptation to crisis and high-level crime situations. Joint contributions allow for beginning fast, concrete actions of prevention and reduction of violence that constitute the foundation for all other development.

Finally, the third theme that still seems fully topical: **the quality of relations between the police and the community** was identified as a major condition in the implementation of prevention and daily safety strategies. This condition appears universal even though applying to extremely different contexts ranging from situations where certain police services are seriously and predominantly corrupt and violent and commit illegal actions in an almost institutionalized way, as in certain countries of Central America, to situations where the police services are generally virtuous—cases of corruption involving only isolated individuals—and whose action is supervised by democratic rules but whose intervention methods nonetheless give rise to debates and considerable mistrust, particularly on the occasion of arrests or operations resulting in the death of citizens. Here again, public trust in the governing institutions is an indispensable condition for any safety environment.

Regarding **methodologies**, a few clear observations were discussed following from 15 years of prevention:

- The simple “diagnosis – action – evaluation” methodology applied at the local level, to different life environments of communities, allows for responding to the real needs of the community.
- Partnership is indispensable but cannot really fulfil all expectations without strong political leadership.
- Finally and above all, emphasis must be placed on the absolute necessity of conceiving, implementing and evaluating prevention and security strategies involving the consultation and participation of young people. This inclusive and participative approach is not idealistic but pragmatic and aims to improve the effectiveness of policies, reinforcing their legitimacy and sustainability.

These observations require ICPC and its activities to evolve. Thus, we endeavour to collect, as systematically as possible, information targeting only prevention practices and policies through the *International Report*, now published every two years, and more sporadic questionnaires and surveys with existing crime observatories throughout the world (since

2007) and above all with municipalities since that year. Finally, this year we are launching our own international observatory of prevention policies (*see the section on "Center of Knowledge"*).

These tools enable us to better account for evolutions and trends and shed light on the most promising practices. The Centre fulfills a unique mission by favouring exchanges of knowledge between all regions of the world on topics linked to prevention and daily security, and the Annual event and other events organized by the ICPC allow these exchanges to be more concrete and operational.