



Prevention is emerging alongside repression as the preferred method for reducing crime, as the first *International Report on Crime Prevention: Trends and Perspective* highlights.

The Report, produced in Montreal, is the first of its kind. While reports from UNODC, WHO, UNICEF, UN-HABITAT and other international organisations discuss specific regions or types of crime, ICPC's Report draws for the first time a **picture of crime prevention around the world** while focusing on the types of crimes that affect citizens on a daily basis such as the safety of youth, women and public spaces.

Current and emerging trends in crime prevention and community safety are also described through various chapters of the International Compendium which depicts more than 65 prevention practices from 27 countries.

Three main conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the Report.

1. Prevention is now an indispensable component in Community Safety Policies

International standards of crime prevention were adopted by the United Nations in 2002 and more than 40 countries have developed their National Strategies within this framework. However, the authors of the Report identified another development highly prevalent in Western countries, where law enforcement is increasingly implemented alongside prevention policies.

Furthermore, countries with high levels of crime and violence, such as South Africa or El Salvador have begun to question their safety policies, and wish to launch more inclusive measures: fighting social exclusion, supporting youth and families, assisting youth at risks of becoming gang members as well as reinserting those who have come into conflict with the law. The prevention of violence and the reinforcement of the rule of law are considered to be crucial for **social, cultural and economic sustainable development**.

In addition, prevention is not only recognised as essential, but it also makes economic sense. **Prevention is not an expense, it is an investment.**

For example, the Canadian Correctional Service assesses that incarcerating an individual costs nearly 90 000\$ per year (88 067), whereas a follow-up within the community of this same individual costs 23 105\$.

2. Crime prevention is effective when applied at the local level within a comprehensive strategy.

More and more cities prioritise action at the local level in order to intervene closer with citizens, engage them in preventive action, and respond to their needs. The authors noticed that cities which developed integrated local strategies obtained good results. These results were clearly demonstrated in developed countries such as Birmingham, United Kingdom. From the first year in which the *Birmingham Neighbourhood Programme* was implemented, youth delinquency dropped by nearly a third (20%), versus only 14% in the neighbourhoods where the strategy was not implemented.

Significant results were also found in certain cities in the South, which have experienced high levels of criminality, such as Bogota, Colombia where the homicide rate dropped from 80 to 23 for 100 000 in ten years (1993-2003) thanks to a comprehensive municipal policy.

We also notice an increase in **structures of local cooperation**, where the partnering of community safety actors is essential. The City of Montreal, drawing on an experience of cooperation and mobilisation of 20 years with Tandem, has recently encouraged all districts to acquire local consultation committees (policies for a more peaceful and safe environment, 2008). Those local councils for safety have existed for 20 years in France and in Belgium and were also developed in other European countries such as Sweden and Norway. However, a more recent and spectacular development is happening in Latin America with structures like the Community Councils of Public Safety in Chile, Urban Safety community associations in Argentina and municipal prevention programmes in El Salvador.

Nevertheless, the authors note the lack of resources and capacities: the local actors and stakeholders must be better mobilised, informed and equipped to engage in crime prevention.

3. Community Safety is everyone's concern

This soundbite remains applicable 20 years after it was said by Gilbert Bonnemaïson, Deputy Mayor of Épinay, a city in the Parisian suburbs, and a true architect of local safety and prevention policies that a source of inspiration around the world today.

The Report also focuses on the **need for tools**. Indeed, it is necessary to have access to better knowledge in order to intervene well: justice and police statistics are not sufficient to account for safety problems and their perception in a neighbourhood. Other tools which allow a better definition of risk factors in a neighbourhood or a city were developed these last years: victimisation surveys, self-report surveys, crime mapping, geocoding and crime observatories. More than 20 examples of this kind are listed in the Report.

Also, ICPC underlines the need for **training and mobilising** local actors. Although still insufficient, training courses are being developed given the strong demand. Amongst the training initiatives mentioned in the Report are UN-HABITAT's Safer Cities Programme, the International Institute of ICPC, as well as training programs from the *Centro de Estudios de Seguridad Ciudadana* designed for young professionals in Latin America.

The *International Report on Crime Prevention and Community Safety* draws a picture and not a classification between countries. Published every two years, it will follow the major evolutions in crime prevention as well as identify the emerging trends. The next editions will focus on new topics and will cover a greater geographical distribution of countries.

The Report 2008 is now available on ICPC's Website (www.crime-prevention-intl.org)

ICPC is a unique international forum for national governments, local authorities, public agencies, specialised institutions, and nongovernmental and community-based organisations to exchange experience and consider emerging knowledge in crime prevention and community safety. ICPC's mission is to assist cities and countries to improve safety and reduce crime and violence by implementing effective and sustainable preventive policies, strategies, and programmes.

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