Crime Prevention

The Bahamas, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago
Resistance and Prevention Program (RAPP)
padf.org/rapp

Overview

Parts of the Caribbean region have experienced a surge in incidents of crime and violence in recent years, including robberies, petty theft, kidnapping and homicides, particularly those related to gang activities. These actions have immediate effects on victims themselves, as well as widespread societal costs. They include diminishing economic and social returns, especially with regard to local business, tourism, investment and overall development indicators. In addition, these challenges have resulted in an overburdened criminal justice system and created a culture of fear among citizens.

Youth violence is of even greater concern. In many Caribbean countries, violent crimes are being committed by people of increasingly younger ages. Risk factors include relative differences in poverty, youth unemployment, weak educational systems, exposure to gangs, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Objectives

This initial, two-and-a-half-year effort has two primary objectives:

- To enhance the capacity of young people, police and justice sector officials to work together on crime prevention. This entails promoting attitudinal and behavioral change through classroom and field training exercises that strengthen justice sector and police understanding of community needs, as well as citizen willingness to support them in daily operations.
- To build mutual trust between these groups to identify and anticipate the causes of crime. This is done through technical support on outreach and mentoring activities that encourage government-citizen collaboration.

This initiative is receiving technical support from American and Caribbean universities and other crime prevention centers. Best practices gleaned from this effort will be disseminated via a regional communications platform, and through annual conferences hosted by participating countries in the region.
Activities

A key component of the program is developing community-driven strategies for addressing crime, while working regionally to apply lessons learned and ensure sustainability. The ultimate goal is to identify lasting solutions to crime and citizen insecurity by installing preventive measures that avoid problems before they take place. As a result of this effort, PADF’s partners are already incorporating a crime prevention agenda and making it an integral part of training courses for government officials and young people.

Partners

PADF has been partnering with the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), local institutions, civil society, the business sector and youth groups to improve anti-violence and crime efforts in the Bahamas, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. It uses holistic methods that target at-risk youth and the communities where they live. This involves collaborating closely with national police, schools and justice sector officials such as prosecutors and judges, as well as the citizens of the larger communities that they serve.

About PADF

The Pan American Development Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, brings together many stakeholders to improve livelihoods, empower communities, strengthen civil society, support human rights, protect the environment and respond to natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean. Established by the Organization of American States in 1962, PADF has worked in every country in the region. In 2014 PADF reached more than 15 million people by investing over $92 million in development resources in 27 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

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