

IDLO Evaluation Brief

MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE IDLO-IMPLEMENTED PROJECT “REDUCING VIOLENCE AND HOMICIDE THROUGH ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN CHAMELECON, SATELITE AND RIVERA HERNANDEZ NEIGHBORHOODS OF SAN PEDRO SULA, HONDURAS”

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1. Introduction and Background

“Reducing Violence and Homicide Through Access to Justice in Chamelecón, Satellite and Rivera Hernández neighborhoods of San Pedro Sula (SPS), Honduras” is an IDLO-implemented program funded by INL / US Department of State. The program had an initial budget of US\$ 5,999,772 with an implementation period of July 2015 - July 2020. The budget was later increased to US\$ 7,271,234 following a program review in March 2017.

The program builds on IDLO’s previous experience in Honduras assisting vulnerable women. Its overall goal is to contribute to the reduction of homicide rates in the three most dangerous neighborhoods of SPS by increasing access to justice for vulnerable populations and improving their protection. The program has four key components: 1) providing legal and support services to victims of gender-based, intra-familial and domestic violence; 2) improving mechanisms for access to justice for prisoners and developing transparent procedures for the enforcement of criminal sentences; 3) establishing legal frameworks for restorative justice and developing rehabilitation/reintegration mechanisms for prisoners; 4) supporting the drafting of a national legal framework for an adolescent criminal justice system.

This Evaluation Brief presents a summary of the mid-term independent evaluation of the program covering the period July 2015 - June 2018.

2. Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

The mid-term evaluation’s design included a reconstruction of the program’s Theory of Change (ToC), to identify the rationale of the intervention and to clarify the causal links between activities, outputs, outcomes and impact. The reconstructed ToC served as the key reference point to develop a set of seven Evaluation Questions (EQs) and their corresponding qualitative and quantitative indicators generated to assess the results achieved. The formulation of EQs was guided by the five OECD/DAC-

based evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability prospects) and a sixth IDLO-specific evaluation criterion (IDLO value added).

Following the inception phase and document review, the evaluation team conducted a two-week field visit to Honduras where interviews and focus group discussions were held with program staff, beneficiary institutions and target groups, including youth from Chamelecón and former persons deprived of liberty (PDL).

3. Findings

Alignment with major stakeholders’ priorities

The program elevated its initial neighborhood-level approach to municipal and national levels due to changes in circumstances and the demands of its partners. This adjustment, which was approved and supported by the donor, shifted the focus of the program more towards policy dialogue and away from direct work with the beneficiaries on the ground. Nevertheless, the program remained relevant to the “Place-Based Strategy” for homicide prevention of the donor and the agendas of the Municipality of SPS and the National Penitentiary Institute (INP) in terms of helping them to protect vulnerable groups and to implement the new penal code.

The program was also aligned with the work of the National Prevention Institute’s (CONAPREV)¹ in supporting capacity strengthening of the interdisciplinary technical committees of the penitentiary system to protect human rights of former prisoners and detainees (PD). The program was also in line with IDLO’s impact goals as outlined in its Strategy 2020, namely empowering people to realize their rights and promoting fair laws and policies along with effective, accessible and accountable institutions to increase access to justice.

¹ CONAPREV is a national committee with members of different organizations (both government and civil society) which has the mandate of preventing and protecting people deprived of liberty against torture,

cruel, unhuman and degrading treatment in their places of custody; investigating complains of violation of rights and giving recommendations to the national authorities.

Allocation of resources and management of the program

The absence of a country director and several staff changes affected staff morale to an extent. The budget adjustment which took place at the outset of the program received formal approval only a year later. This negatively affected the clarity of reporting which was still linked to the original budget. The initial design of the program did not include a logical framework with indicators at various levels for expected results (e.g. impact, outcomes and outputs). An exercise to develop indicators was carried out by the program's M&E² focal point at a later stage (in early 2017) but with limited dialogue with IDLO M&E global focal points. An effort to track the progress of the program and its achievements was carried out during 2017 and 2018 by the local M&E officer but with no systematic routine or procedures. Hence, quarterly reports were narrative and lacked quantitative data which are required by the donor.

There was no integrated IT management system in place to ensure a smooth flow of information between the field office in Honduras and IDLO headquarters. This negatively affected, inter alia, the efficiency and timeliness of reporting. The program did not have a comprehensive communication strategy which could be useful to increase the visibility of the intervention, enhance broader support and complement program partners' communication needs. Security has played an important role in the program given the high levels of violence in the country. However, some security procedures have been met with resistance by the local team, who perceived them as an obstacle to implementation.

Despite these challenges the program team ensured continuous implementation of activities and continued to build fruitful relations with relevant stakeholders.

Procedures and outreach to support government response to victims of gender-based, intra-familial and domestic violence in SPS

IDLO has proven to have a strong convening power and has contributed to dialogue with various actors to help create the Municipal Model of Attention to Women and the Municipal Policy for Children and Adolescents, which were approved by the Municipal Legislative Chamber. The process of drafting the Policy included interaction with other partners including Save the Children and UNICEF. The analytical work related to the drafting of the Policy addressed gender issues, but the actual Policy has no specific focus on gender.

The program supported communication campaigns on human rights for vulnerable groups. An achievement in this field was the campaign 'Píxeles de la Vida' which involved a photography workshop for 10 young people from Chamelecón, one of the target neighborhoods. The campaign was highly successful in terms of sensitizing relevant stakeholders (such as the Supreme Court). However, the challenge of promoting longer-term benefits for the youth of the targeted neighborhood remains. During the evaluation field mission, three young beneficiaries were interviewed, none of which was working or studying.

Promoting better access to justice mechanisms for prisoners through support to the Pastoral Penitenciaria³, National Penitentiary Institute and CONAPREV

The program provided financial support to the Pastoral Penitenciaria (PP) for its regular services and supported the construction of a new Reintegration Centre. Furthermore, the program facilitated PP's work through writing technical manuals on legal assistance, commute and hearing groups. The program also delivered training on monitoring and producing financial reports. However, the assistance provided met with some resistance from the PP, especially the work on technical manuals. This was mainly due to the lack of managerial culture at the PP but was also linked to the notion, not uncommon inside the organization, that while the PP receives considerable support, the organization does not have an equivalent level of political importance. The expectations are that the program should help the PP to build relations with the municipality and the national government (which is, in fact, part of the program design) in addition to the hands-on technical support already provided.

The program has helped the National Penitentiary Institute (INP) to implement the new legislation on the penal system including assistance on the following: development of a manual for the work of the technical council in the Penitentiary Centers; training for the technical councils to assist the PDL in the penitentiaries; dialogue within the Technical Table of Access to Justice to PDL; support for drafting a manual for individual assistance and support to the South-South exchanges with Paraguay, El Salvador and Dominican Republic. These exchanges were highly appreciated and regional cooperation is expected to increase in the future.

CONAPREV benefited from IDLO's support mainly in relation to meetings, conferences and work premises when present in SPS. IDLO and CONAPREV also developed

² Monitoring & Evaluation

³ Prison Pastoral Care

a capacity building plan for the staff of the interdisciplinary technical committees of the Penitentiary System. CONAPREV is involved in the debate on human rights and access to justice and considers IDLO as a key actor to help them foster access to justice for vulnerable groups.

Legal framework for alternative/restorative justice

Component 3 of the program, which aims to establish a legal framework for restorative justice and rehabilitation/reintegration mechanisms for the prisoners, has not yet started. A study on the applicability of restorative justice in Honduras remains to be carried out during the second part of the program. Nevertheless, in May 2017, the program promoted the National Meeting about the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of People Deprived of Liberty in partnership with the INP. The meeting included panelists from the Regional Penitentiary Academy, the Penitentiary Centers of El Salvador, the Penitentiary Management of Dominican Republic, the PP, the National Penitentiary Academy of Honduras, the INP and IDLO. All 25 Penitentiary Centers in the country took part in the meeting. Overall, there is increasing political will in Honduras to recognize that penitentiaries should be places for rehabilitation, not punishment.

Legal framework for persons under 18 years of age in conflict with the law

The implementation of this program component has been hampered by numerous institutional changes in the country related to the theme of youth and by the elections which took place in 2017. There is a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) ready to be signed between IDLO and the Supreme Court of Justice which envisages a study to identify the causes behind imprisonment of people under 18 years of age and to promote related judicial capacity building activities. This part of the program was kept rather open-ended in its design, as agreed with the donor.

4. Conclusions

Relevance

The program is relevant for all the actors involved as its objectives and strategies are in line with the donor's Place-Based Strategy for homicide prevention, consistent with the strategic framework of IDLO, and in line with the priorities of national stakeholders. Some of the issues the program addresses are common within the region and there is potential for enhancing cross-border cooperation among the Central American countries to effectively address them.

Efficiency

The program implementation team coped, to varying degrees, with the challenges met. These included a delay in the formal approval of the project budget and the extended absence of a country director. The evaluation also noted some duplication of work, for example in the case of financial reporting. There was also limited ownership of IDLO security procedures by the program field staff.

The program did not have an original logical framework including achievement indicators and a timeline. A partial M&E effort to follow-up in 2017 remained insufficient. The available reports did not include the newly added budget lines.

All these shortcomings, mainly related to management systems that were not fully functional and unclear procedures for decision-making, negatively affected the operational environment and decreased efficiency.

Effectiveness

Component 1 of the program (Protection of Victims of Violence) was effective but the full effects of the developed Municipal Model of Attention to Women and the Municipal Policy for Children and Adolescents will still need to be assessed during the final evaluation. Component 2 (Assistance to the PP, the INP and CONAPREV) was partially effective, especially the work with the INP which has advanced significantly with the provision of technical assistance and training.

Regarding support to the PP, the program did not fully meet some of the initial ambitions, especially in terms of increasing the scale of PP's partnerships with public institutions. In this context the evaluation identified a lack of alignment between the expectations of the program and the PP which may be slowing down the implementation of relevant activities. There was little high-level dialogue between IDLO and the PP to determine the course of action for program implementation. The organization CONAPREV, as a relatively new institution in the country, needed to increase its visibility. IDLO assisted in this regard and also collaborated with CONAPREV on judicial capacity building activities and mobilizing other actors around access to justice.

Component 3 (Rehabilitation/Reintegration/ Restorative Justice) and component 4 (Youth in Conflict with the Law) have made less progress in implementation. Regarding component 3, some work has started on a dialogue on rehabilitation and reintegration, but not on restorative

justice, which is still in its incipient phase, while component 4 is just starting. Due to the elections in 2017, many changes have taken place in the relevant institutions as well as in the perception of the theme of youth, which made the work on component 4 more difficult. The most concrete activity related to this component is the draft high-level MoU with the Supreme Court of Justice.

Impact and Sustainability Prospects

IDLO has been successful in institutionally positioning itself in Honduras and in interacting with key partners. The program has helped to achieve significant changes in public policy and to build trust among the key stakeholders. The Municipal Model of Attention to Women is in place, the Municipal Policy for Children and Adolescents was approved, and the councils for assisting the PDL are being trained and supported in their work. This opens up opportunities for positive long-term changes if the implementation of these protocols, legislation, and introduction of new concepts continues and is well managed. To deliver results, the key stakeholders need to remain committed. To further strengthen the engagement of key actors, the program may consider developing a communication strategy, which is currently lacking. This topic shall be further explored during the second half of the implementation period, especially in the context of promoting broader campaigns for the victims of gender-based and domestic violence to secure their rights.

Sustainability prospects are high in terms of activities within component 1 (Protection of Victims of Violence) and partially high for component 2 (Assistance to the PP, the INP and CONAPREV). In terms of the former, the approval of the Municipal Policy for Children and Adolescents indicates a long-term commitment from the governing bodies. The model of integrated assistance to victims of domestic, intra-familial and gender-based violence is also being incorporated by the municipality. Regarding the latter, there are challenges to sustainability as the PP has not been significantly engaged in the process of formalizing procedures and sharing experiences. The INP, on the other hand, has taken up the work of IDLO and is creating more stable structures to assist the PDL. CONAPREV is undergoing a process of institutional strengthening. It has little resources but with continued commitment and sound leadership, the institution is likely to absorb the program's assistance in a sustainable way. It is premature to assess sustainability for components 3 and 4 of the program (Rehabilitation/Reintegration/Restorative Justice and Youth in Conflict with the Law) as they are still in the initial stages of implementation.

IDLO value added

IDLO's methodology of supporting the development and implementation of legislation and public policy, underpinned by its neutral role and knowledge of the local context, was appreciated by the key stakeholders. IDLO was able to engage actors from different organizations to discuss themes such as, inter alia, access to justice, rehabilitation and reintegration of PDL, gender-based violence, youth in conflict with law and restorative justice. IDLO has demonstrated a high level of convening power and played a role in influencing public debate. All these aspects added value to the program.

5. Recommendations

R1: Strengthen work with the PP and its relationship with state institutions

The engagement between the program and the PP is at the center of the program's design. There should be a clarification of expectations from each partner regarding results to be achieved by the end of the program and a revision of the work developed up to now with lessons learned. The strategic agenda and work plan should be agreed upon and validated by senior officials on both sides.

R2: Strengthen the work on data collection and monitoring

It is necessary to strengthen the M&E system of the program (e.g. policy, procedures, online data base, etc.) with full involvement of staff in both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Design of future programs should include logical frameworks with robust indicators formulated for M&E purposes.

R3: Strengthen program management (organization, methods, and IT systems)

It is necessary to review and/or establish work processes through utilization of online systems with a view to (i) enhancing operational efficiency, (ii) improving monitoring, (iii) improving financial management and reporting, (iv) facilitating communication and (v) clarifying roles and responsibilities within the team.

R4: Develop a communication strategy for the program

It is recommended that a communication strategy be developed for the program with clear goals and procedures to guide communication efforts until the end of the program. The communication strategy should include, inter alia, a guide for communications with stakeholders and a guide for institutional communication. Communication to the public at large should involve "human interest stories" to increase buy-in. The strategy should also consider the communication needs of the

program's key partners such as the PP, the Municipality of SPS and the INP.

R5: Review the program's end targets in the areas of Restorative Justice and Youth in Conflict with the Law.

The program components related to 'Restorative Justice' and 'Youth in Conflict with the Law' have not yet been fully activated. Therefore, they should be reviewed and realistic workplans should be established for the remaining two years of the program duration. In this regard it should be considered that a process consisting of (i) initial inputs to a policy/legislation, (ii) approval of a policy/legislation and (iii) implementation of concepts developed is rather lengthy.

R6: Address 'gender' as a cross-cutting theme in the program

Different needs of girls, boys, women and men should be considered when designing studies and proposing new public policies. IDLO has an excellent opportunity to further add value and to incorporate gender considerations into public policies to achieve adequate outcomes and impacts for different gender groups in the sphere of juvenile justice and in the work with INP.

R7: Enhance the South-South dialogue on emerging themes

There are some common developmental challenges in the Central American region. IDLO could help facilitate dialogue on themes of common interest and similar problems within the region and promote exchange of best practices/understanding of shared challenges. This applies particularly to the themes of 'Restorative Justice' and 'Youth in Conflict with the Law' which are still in the initial stages of implementation.

R8: Assist the governing bodies in implementing the approved policies to strengthen sustainability

The program is now moving to the phase of assisting the implementation of public policies within component 1. To ensure continuity of work when the program ends, the assistance should include support to the leadership of the municipality and a continuous promotion of civil society organizations' involvement in the municipal/national policy debate.