DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE FOR CITIZEN SECURITY

Citizen Security Programming 101: What to Consider

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Christina Schultz
Front cover photo credit: Jocabed Portillo Alvarez/Juntos para la Prevención de la Violencia (USAID/JPV)
Introduction

Citizen security can be defined as “the process of establishing, strengthening and protecting democratic civic order, eliminating threats of violence in a population and allowing for safe and peaceful coexistence.” For the average citizen, security is a quality of life issue, corresponding to how one feels at home; walking around the neighborhood; going to work, school, or the grocery store; and considering what physical risk tomorrow may pose for family and friends. Vulnerable groups — commonly youth, women, and minorities — suffer disproportionately from violence and insecurity. They often do not have the means to safeguard themselves from rampant crime, bad policing, weak justice systems, and corrupt officials.

Citizen security concerns more than crime and violence. Given that citizen security programming focuses on solving a complex social problem through building responsive, transparent, and accountable institutions and systems that serve the public’s needs and priorities, such programming normally falls under the purview of democracy and governance. A safe, secure environment is essential for sustainable social, economic, and political development. Inadequate security policies, structures, and mechanisms contribute to weak governance and instability. This insecurity makes it more difficult for most citizens to access government services, participate in political processes, and maintain livelihoods to lift themselves out of poverty. Citizen security initiatives can also be integrated into efforts in other sectors, such as economic development, education, health, and environmental management. Evidence has shown that integrated programming allows for a more holistic, cross-sectoral, and effective approach to solving development problems than siloed approaches.

This briefing paper offers a list of eight factors to consider when designing programs to improve citizen security, whether it is a main goal or a critical objective. The focus on each of these factors primarily relates to crime and violence and how they affect citizen security. The paper is intended for consideration by policymakers, practitioners, law enforcement, and community leaders. Although the list is not intended to be exhaustive, it is based on Chemonics’ work in the domain of democracy and governance and on an increasing number of cross-sectoral programs over the past 40 years in nearly 150 countries. Collaborating with local governments, civil society organizations, academia, independent media, the private sector, and communities themselves has been central to this work. These eight areas of consideration include evidence-based information; identification and coordination of stakeholders; understanding behaviors and capacity; public policy; allocation of resources; strategies, methodologies, and tools; accountability; and monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

Eight Areas of Consideration

(1) Evidence-Based Information

Collecting quality data that provides details on places, groups, and behaviors is essential to developing targeted strategies and evidence-based programming for improving citizen security. Evidence goes beyond the forensic particulars gathered from a crime scene and is broadly defined as “systematic factual observations of all kinds.” It relates to “the data developed by scientific methods to observe and predict any kind of truth, including facts about health, education, crime, and justice.” Gathering evidence-based information on citizen security is not always a straightforward process because hard data on the incidence of crime and violence and citizens’ perspectives on crime and violence in their neighborhoods may not correlate exactly. Furthermore, under-reporting is common. Citizens do not always feel safe reporting crimes and violence and are less likely to rely on state institutions they do not trust to guarantee their personal safety. When assessing citizen security, therefore, attending how secure citizens feel in their neighborhoods may help critically illuminate citizen security issues. This type of evidence can be collected through surveys and other tools.

Although it is necessary to consider more than forensic data to develop a comprehensive picture of citizen security, it is also necessary to adhere to standards of precision when gathering information that identifies and describes the territorial nature of crime and violence. Information collected in this way is more likely to increase the effectiveness of citizen security efforts. It is not enough to look at the crime statistics of a country or a city; this information might be too general to determine the specific nature and
drivers of local violence. The focus should instead be on collecting information about neighborhoods to identify crime and violence hotspots. What happens on one street in a neighborhood might not happen on the next; needs and priorities, therefore, are likely to differ from block to block. In addition to geography, collection methods should consider types of crime and violence, criminal and gang networks and other perpetrators, days and times, and other categories. Information in these categories must then be analyzed to identify the principal characteristics of crime and violence and the main factors precipitating them.

Gathering useful empirical data is a multistep process and, at some points, overlaps with other programmatic considerations. The first step is a planning exercise to determine the type of data needed to address the specific citizen security problem; how, from whom, and when that data will be gathered; and the resources — both human and financial — available for this effort. Step two involves the actual collection of quantitative and qualitative data through various sources, including, but not limited to, institutional records, universities and research organizations, surveys, focus groups, and interviews. Step three requires analysis of the collected data to identify trends, causes, drivers, and other information that can be processed into actionable evidence (see Exhibit 2 on next page). The validity, reliability, precision, timeliness, and integrity of the data should be evaluated before indicators are used to assess progress toward intended changes and actual results or adaptive management processes are undertaken as part of monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Evidence means little if it is not shared, step four, with relevant stakeholders to better illuminate the citizen insecurity context and support informed decision-making. Finally, in step five, decision-makers put actionable evidence into practice to develop more effective policies, strategies, and programs; better inform the public; and improve resource allocation.

(2) Identification and Coordination of Stakeholders

The protection of citizens involves a broad set of stakeholders who have an investment, interest, or share in security. The “security system” in a country encompasses a broad range of actors, including core state institutions that have a formal mandate to ensure the safety of the country’s citizens, management and oversight bodies, justice and law enforcement institutions, and non-statutory security forces (see Exhibit 1). Civil society organizations can play vital roles in the areas of research, oversight, advocacy, and community organization, among others. When statutory groups do not coordinate mandates, policies, and programs, their efforts often undercut each another. For example, approaches that integrate prevention and law enforcement, when delivered strategically, better respond to the complex nature of the social environments where crime and violence occur. An effective way to begin coordination efforts is to map out relevant actors to develop a shared understanding of the institutional structure governing security, including which institutions are responsible for what. Effective coordination can only happen when each actor understands what the other actors are doing and the interrelationships between and among all actors.

**Exhibit 1. The Security System**

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**CORE SECURITY ACTORS:**
- Armed forces; police; gendarmeries; paramilitary forces; presidential guards, intelligence, and security services (military and civilian); coast guards; border guards; customs authorities; and reserve or local security units (civil defense forces, national guards, and militias)

**JUSTICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT INSTITUTIONS:**
- Judiciary, justice ministries, prisons, criminal investigation and prosecution services, human rights commissions and ombudsmen, and customary and traditional justice systems

**SECURITY MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT BODIES:**
- Executive branch; national security advisory bodies; select legislature and legislative committees; defense, internal affairs, and foreign affairs ministries; customary and traditional authorities; financial management bodies (finance ministries, budget offices, financial audit, and planning units); and civil society organizations (civilian review boards and public complaints commissions)

**NON-STATUTORY SECURITY FORCES:**
- Liberation armies, guerrilla armies, private body-guard units, private security companies, and political party militias
WHAT DOES THE DATA TELL US ABOUT RIBERAS DEL SACRAMENTO?

Riberas del Sacramento, with a population of about 13,500, is a suburb established 13 years ago in the northern part of the city of Chihuahua in Mexico. It ranks second among the city’s 10 highest crime neighborhoods. Poor planning and deficient infrastructure and services have turned this neighborhood into a breeding ground for inequality, violence, and insecurity. Nearly 30 percent of the 5,430 housing units have been abandoned due to the precarious economic situation of households. Health clinics are far from the suburb; the sole medical office is inside a private pharmacy. Until last year, there was no police station. Dirt, garbage, discarded cars, and makeshift commercial stalls litter the streets.

Chemonics International, through the USAID-funded Juntos para la Prevención de la Violencia (JPV) project in Mexico, helps strengthen systems that prevent local crime and violence. These systems comprise public and private sector actors, civil society organizations, and academic institutions that design, implement, and evaluate crime and violence prevention practices and policies. The program has been operating in Riberas del Sacramento since January 2017.

**SOCIOECONOMIC CONTEXT**

- 38% 0-14
- 31% 15-29
- 7% 50+
- 24% 30-49

NEARLY 70% of the population is less than 30

- 28.9% OF WOMEN between the ages of 15 and 18 have had at least one child.
- 56.1% OF THE POPULATION between 15 and 24 years of age is married or lives in a free union.
- 67.1% OF THE POPULATION is economically active, of which 50.3% are female.
- 29% OF THE POPULATION aged 15 and older has not completed middle school.

**THE MOST FREQUENT INCIDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRIMES</th>
<th>DISORDERLY CONDUCT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House robberies</td>
<td>Noise complaints or public disturbances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>Alcohol or drug consumption in public spaces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHO IS COMMITTING THESE CRIMES?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-60</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-60</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHERE DO THE CRIMES OCCUR?**

Density of Incidents November 2017

**WHEN DO THESE CRIMES OCCUR?**

- Most home thefts occur in the afternoon, particularly from noon to 4 p.m., when most residents are working or at school.
- Youth violence intensifies at night (between 7:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.) and on weekends.

Data drawn from:
- Dirección de Seguridad Pública Municipal (Chihuahua), Unidad de Análisis, January to July 2017 and July to November 2017
- USAID JPV, Diagnóstico documental y participativo de Riberas del Sacramento, May 2017
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), Censo de Población y Vivienda, 2010
- INEGI, Encuesta de Cohesión Social para la Prevención de la Violencia y la Delincuencia, 2014
As the recipients of security services, citizens cannot be left out of interventions to develop solutions to security problems. Effective coordination between communities and the government increase the legitimacy and sustainability of efforts to reduce crime and violence. This coordination, often referred to as “collective impact,” entails joint efforts to identify problems, establish shared objectives, and design and implement agreed solutions. Prevention, for example, is a cooperative process in which citizens collaborate with the police, providing essential information, while local authorities work to understand the local population’s needs and concerns and, in turn, respond appropriately. The success of citizen security programs depends on relationships of mutual trust between communities and the government.

(3) Understanding Behaviors and Capacity

Although effective citizen sector programming requires an understanding of the who (i.e., the actors involved in security sector governance) and the what (i.e., their mandates), it also needs to take into account the why (i.e., dynamics and behaviors) and the how (i.e., institutional capacity). Each entity has its own “personality” in undertaking its roles and responsibilities, which cannot be separated from how it performs and interacts with other stakeholders. Knowledge of the political, social, and operational reasons why institutions and individuals act as they do is essential to understanding a local system’s dynamics and identifying the broader institutional context of citizen security issues.

Power relations, social and ideological underpinnings, and incentives drive behavior and dynamics. Thinking and working politically (TWP) entails looking at how politics and power affect a sector, institution, geographic area, or issue and applying this insight to crafting politically savvy approaches to development. TWP assists with determining the political and social reasons why institutional and individual actors behave as they do. Purely technical solutions will not be effective if they do not contend with political factors that can either facilitate or hinder reforms or improvements to services that protect citizens. TWP also recognizes that politics is not static and flexible; iterative program design and management is necessary and must be grounded in deep contextual knowledge. Assessment tools, such as Political Economy Analysis, help identify these factors and contribute to a deeper understanding of the local context, informing programming that takes advantage of opportunities and navigates risks to make technical solutions more effective and sustainable (see box).6

Many government institutions involved in the security sector lack the technical and management capacity to deliver citizen security services effectively. Thinking and working institutionally (TWI) entails looking at the skills, abilities, processes, systems, resources, and legal and institutional frameworks that an organization needs to fulfill its mandate and applying this understanding to crafting operationally savvy approaches to improving the organization’s performance. TWI helps determine how an entity functions to ensure that technical solutions can provide the most relevant capacity building support. TWI acknowledges institutions as adaptive systems that respond to changing operating environments and focuses on

FROM USAID’s TOOLKIT

USAID has developed a series of frameworks and methodologies that support development initiatives such as citizen security programming. A sample of these include:

- Political Economy Analysis is a qualitative field research methodology used to illuminate the power relations; formal and informal institutions; structural, social, and ideological underpinnings; and incentives driving behavior and dynamics related to the focus of study.
- Human and Institutional Capacity Building is a model of structured and integrated processes designed to identify fundamental causes of performance gaps in institutions, address those gaps through a range of performance solutions in the context of all human performance factors, and enable cyclical processes of continuous performance improvement through the establishment of performance monitoring systems.
- Local Systems Framework promotes the principle that achieving and sustaining any development outcome depends on the contributions of multiple and interconnected actors — governments, civil society, the private sector, universities, and individual citizens.
- Collaborating, Learning, and Adaption is a set of practices that helps improve development effectiveness by working with stakeholders on areas of shared interest; reflecting and utilizing information; and apply learning through adjustments to interventions.

interrelated functions to facilitate institutional strengthening. Several development agencies have created frameworks to help institutions function better. Examples include the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (United States Agency for International Development [USAID]), Capacity Development and Results Framework (World Bank), Capacity Assessment Framework (United Nations Development Program), and Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (Harvard University Center for International Development).

(4) Public Policy
Public policy is considered sound when it solves a problem efficiently and effectively, serves justice, supports governmental institutions and policies, and encourages active, empathetic citizenship. Formulating national and local policies around citizen security depends less on attending to a single issue than to a combination of threats requiring multiple responses. Given that every country, city, and municipality faces distinct challenges, a differentiated approach is necessary to build policy relevant to particular contexts. Policies are more likely to produce measurable, positive outcomes when derived from an accurate assessment of the local environment, including how well evidence-based information captures threats to security; stakeholders and their involvement in consensus-building processes to fulfill their mandates; and an understanding of competing interests and realistic responses. Crafting effective public policy is not a one-time event, but a continuous process that requires close monitoring and evaluation to ensure that laws, regulations, strategies, and funding priorities are created or modified to address today's needs.

How public policies are made and applied must also consider the legal and institutional framework of the different levels of government — generally national, regional, and local — and how they interact. This vertical coordination process is necessary to ensure that policies are not contradictory, unrealistic, or unconstitutional and that issues are dealt with at the appropriate level. National policies should provide a comprehensive framework and general directives that allow local governments to adopt strategies reflecting local conditions and priorities. Those developing local policies should take national policies into account and consider how to incorporate them to benefit their constituents. Regional governments (e.g., at the levels of the state, department, or province) help bridge gaps between governments at the national and local levels in the administration of public safety and efficient resource allocation. How well public policies at all three levels are articulated and coordinated influences the extent to which public services benefit citizens.

(5) Allocation of Resources
Although funding should ideally correspond to the level of insecurity, limited budgets always require choices to be made about how to distribute resources. But an increase in spending will not necessarily correlate to a decrease in crime and violence. For example, states with lower levels of crime are not always the ones that dedicate a greater proportion of their budget to the criminal justice system. The budgeting process and the allocation and use of resources may also critically contribute to the reduction of crime. TWI capacity building efforts should strive to optimize resource management. Empirical evidence, which is fundamental to the development and implementation of public policy, is also necessary to determine how to allocate resources where they are most needed and, in the process, assess stakeholders' efficiency. A cost-benefit analysis can help determine whether government agencies are using resources wisely to meet their objectives. When outputs (specific services) are tied to input data (allocated resources), they can be used as indicators of efficiency to measure outcomes — namely, how well money spent on public safety services is being matched to needs to improve citizen security. Periodic reviews of public expenditures related to citizen security should be guided by actionable evidence to ensure different agencies' budgets are effectively aligned and to identify inefficiencies, imbalances, or gaps in resource allocations.

(6) Strategies, Methodologies, and Tools
The complexity of public safety problems requires formulating comprehensive and participatory strategies that embrace multiple stakeholders, levels, policies, and sectors. The development of prevention programs should include a theory of change model that specifies a logical sequence by which a strategy produces measurable outputs of action that reduce outcomes of crime and violence — that is, a theory of
change model that explains how and why the strategy should improve citizen security (see box). Research and experience have shown, for example, that iron-fisted approaches, which rely on reactive law enforcement and punitive measures, fail to reduce levels of crime and violence. These heavy-handed responses also negatively affect peaceful coexistence and erode citizen trust in government. In addition, they can be more expensive, especially when the costs of court cases and incarceration are factored into the equation. Integrated, inclusive approaches that focus on individuals and communities and address drivers and root causes of crime and violence have proven to improve citizen security in more sustainable ways. Prevention programming is generally viewed as the most efficient and effective means to enable peaceful coexistence.

Prevention strategies can be classified in various ways but are most commonly divided into three categories of intervention: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary prevention involves measures focused on improving individuals’ general well-being. It entails looking at socioeconomic factors at the individual, family and community levels that lead to crime and violence to facilitate work with the broader population. Secondary prevention focuses on intervening with at-risk groups to stop them from becoming offenders or victims. It identifies and targets individuals who are more susceptible to violent or criminal behavior, such as youth who have not graduated from school, gang members, and people suffering from substance abuse. Tertiary prevention involves measures directed toward individuals who have already been involved with crime or victimization. It is intended to prevent successive incidents, avoid recidivism, and facilitate rehabilitation. \(^8\)

The Inter-American Development Bank’s prevention framework proposes institutional strengthening, similar to TWI, across the following five areas:

- **Social intervention.** Addressing violent and criminal behavior among young people, substance abuse, and domestic violence
- **Situational prevention.** Reducing opportunities for criminal and violent behavior stemming from environmental factors
- **Policing.** Detecting opportunities for crime and deterring its occurrence
- **Judiciary system.** Detecting, prosecuting, and sentencing offenders
- **Penitentiary system.** Increasing the effectiveness of rehabilitation to prevent recidivism after integration into society\(^9\)

Another model differentiates among activities that target offenders, situations, and victims. It elaborates on what primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention efforts look like when oriented toward the offender, situation, or victim (or potential victim) and on implementing strategies geared towards response and prevention. \(^10\) Exhibit 3 (next page) shows a variety of methods used in citizen security efforts both by Chemonics and others. \(^11\)

**(7) Accountability**

The accountability of public security services can be defined as the compliance of government actors “with robust internal and external conduct review mechanisms as well as with the laws and policies governing their institutional missions; the transparency of these actors to the population they serve; and the ability of non-state actors (media, civil society organizations, and citizens) to publicize violations.” \(^12\) Poorly performing government institutions are often accompanied by high levels of corruption and
practices that violate human rights, further hampering their ability to protect citizens. Countries with high levels of corruption tend to have higher levels of violence, gangs, and drug-trafficking problems (Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2016). Additionally, audit entities and oversight committees too often are understaffed, underfunded, and lack the authority to effect change. The lack of public information and opportunities for participation also hamper the oversight efforts of watchdog groups and interested citizens.

However, government transparency and citizen participation alone cannot improve the accountability of security systems in ways that allows them to adapt and grow based on experience. An accountability ecosystem approach brings together useful information, including the mapping of stakeholders, an understanding of TWP and TWI, the horizontal and vertical integration of public policies and resources, and the complex nature of integrated strategies to assess and account for the power each of these factors has and how they influence government accountability. This comprehensive understanding allows stakeholders to gauge the effectiveness of citizen security services, learn from those experiences, and improve performance. This can facilitate the construction of a suite of indicators that permit audit institutions, civil society organizations and others to actively monitor the improvement of citizen security to influence policy design and programming (see box).

### SHARPENING THE SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS

Several tools are commonly used to facilitate oversight of citizen security programs. These include:

- **Community Safety Scorecard**, a community-based monitoring tool that assesses public safety services, projects, funding, and government performance by analyzing qualitative data obtained through focus group discussions with citizens
- **Social Audit**, a participatory monitoring process through which project information (e.g., on finances, procurement, and access to data) is collected, analyzed, and shared publicly
- **Citizen Report Card**, an assessment of public services by their users through client (i.e., citizen) feedback surveys that is often accompanied by extensive media coverage and civil society advocacy
- **Citizen Satisfaction Survey**, a quantitative assessment of government performance and quality of service delivery based on citizens’ experience
(8) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Despite dramatic evidence of the impact of crime and violence on personal wellbeing and socioeconomic development and the high price tag of police and court systems, many governments do not establish the same metrics for performance in citizen security that they do in other areas, such as health or education. Although programs in these sectors are designed with strategic objectives, such as lowering the infant mortality rate, not many governments dare to set measurable indicators for reducing crime and violence.

As demonstrated above, citizen security programs should be designed with clear goals that not only consider the causes of crime and violence but also stakeholders’ motivations and capacities, resources, and policies. Similarly, monitoring, evaluation, and learning cannot be an afterthought when attempting to achieve specific results. Without a theory of change and a way to measure the achievement of milestones, targets, and objectives, it is difficult to identify whether policies and programs need to be scrapped, modified, or replicated to, for example, reduce the homicide rate. Signposts are necessary to determine whether efforts are leading to progress.

Chemonics’ experience with evidence-informed and participatory approaches to designing and implementing citizen security programs attests to the value of setting up an effective monitoring, evaluation, and learning process to support feedback loops and continuous learning that enable decision-making and adaptive management. Adaptive management “seeks to better achieve desired outcomes and impacts through the systematic, iterative, and planned use of emergent knowledge and learning throughout the program lifecycle.” A participatory approach to adaptive management is often referred to as “Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting.” This learning may happen by consulting data, findings, conclusions, lessons, and analyses as well as by sharing experiences and observations. The general suite of monitoring and evaluation tools should be made available to gather this evidence and track the effectiveness of citizen security programming, including clear baselines, realistic logical frameworks, measurable indicators, control groups as benchmarks, surveys for comparing perceptions of violence against data on statistics, and other mechanisms. Citizen security indicators should be as detailed and disaggregated as possible (in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic level, geographical area, and other categories) to reflect the differences between various groups within a community and target the ones most in need. Experience-based information on the need for public safety services (demand-side) should be compared to the data on the quality, quantity, and speed of the services offered (supply-side).

Although additional factors may come into play when designing citizen security programming, Chemonics’ experience has shown that it is most effective to consider these eight factors together. Country, city, and neighborhood contexts will differ, and their particularities will determine how much weight is placed on each factor and the specific activities needed to promote an integrated strategy to improve “safe and peaceful co-existence” for communities and vulnerable groups.
Notes