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MINISTERIO PÚBLICO DE HONDURAS

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Organization: Ministerio Público de Honduras [Honduras Prosecutor’s Office]
Sector: Prosecutors
Project Title: Crime Prevention in Tegucigalpa: Hotspots Interventions in Schools
Project Location: Tegucigalpa, Honduras

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project will intervene in educational centers located in the most dangerous neighborhoods of Tegucigalpa to prevent students from engaging in criminal or high-risk activities. The Prosecutor’s Office recognizes the importance of crime prevention, especially the need to work with youth in conflict zones to avoid involvement with gangs or in criminal acts. For this reason, the project contemplates the development of a georeferenced data mapping system of high-impact crimes (e.g. homicides, human trafficking, sexual abuse, among others) to identify the hotspots where the Prosecutors Office should concentrate its intervention efforts. After developing hotspots maps, a set of high-crime neighborhoods will be *randomly* selected to receive a crime prevention intervention targeting schools.

The intervention will consist of forming an inter-institutional group of approximately 100 trainers to give lectures to students on the following topics: comprehensive care of victims and witnesses, comprehensive care of vulnerable groups, gang approaches, drug use, and self-esteem. The Ministerio Público will also offer trainers more information on the specific safety issues that exist in the area where the school is located. The project will have a monitoring and evaluation strategy designed to isolate the causal effect of the intervention. It is expected that at the end of the project, the hotspots where there was an intervention will have a lower incidence of crime around them, and that students in schools that received the intervention will demonstrate lower levels of antisocial behavior, less drug use, and thereby lower truancy and dropout rates.

3. IMPLEMENTING ENTITY

The Ministerio Público is the institution of the Honduran State empowered to conduct the investigation of crimes and exercise public prosecution. The project will be carried out by the Strategic Criminal Persecution Module (MEPP), a unit specialized in monitoring the prosecution management activity and systematizing information to guide the operations of the Ministerio Público.



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4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. PUBLIC POLICY PROBLEM

The high rates of violence and crime in Honduras are a major concern for citizens and authorities. This problem is particularly acute among young people as they are frequent victims of violence and criminal behavior. The development of prevention policies, aimed at young people in education centers, is a promising route to reduce insecurity rates. However, the success of such youth interventions has not been rigorously evaluated in Honduras.

The Ministerio Público can contribute to a more targeted focus of prevention efforts. However, the information that could potentially be used for prevention purposes remains underutilized. The Ministerio Público has a vast amount of information of the prosecution process (from criminal complaint to sentencing) that lacks adequate processing and systematization, which undermines the potential for this information to provide an analytical value-added to guide prevention efforts.

B. PUBLIC POLICY OBJECTIVES

Consistent with the *Strategic Plan of the Prosecutor's Office 2015-2020* and the *National Plan*, and based on the problems indicated previously, the pilot intervention seeks to achieve the following strategic objectives:

1. Generate a spatial information system of criminal behavior for strategic and tactical analysis
2. Raise awareness among at-risk youth about the characteristics of criminal behavior in their immediate environment and provide risk prevention strategies applicable to their context.
3. Reduce the incidence of crime around intervened schools.

C. PROPOSED ACTIVITY

The impact assessment design of this project is based on a randomized controlled trial (RCT). The Ministerio Público will first identify hotspots of criminal activity in Tegucigalpa. Subsequently, it will randomly select two groups of hotspots: one will serve as a control group and the other as a treatment group. Once the hotspots are identified, the Ministerio Público will approach educational authorities to implement the intervention program in schools that are within (or near) the treatment group hotspots. The intervention consists of providing training to members of the interinstitutional group, equipping them to lecture students in the treatment group schools. The courses will address the following topics: comprehensive care of victims and witnesses, comprehensive care to vulnerable groups, gang approaches, drug use, and self-esteem. The trainings will be enhanced with maps of criminal information around each school, which will serve to contextualize the lectures and improve the relevance of prevention recommendations.



The activities associated with the project include:

1. **Geo-referencing of crimes:** The Ministerio Público will use the information contained in the complaints, initial hearing records, sentences, and corpse removal records (prosecution management information) to identify criminal incidents related to homicides, sexual offenses, drug trafficking, and human trafficking.
2. **Generation of hotspot maps:** Once the information is geo-referenced, the MEPP will generate hotspot maps to identify the most crime-affected areas. These hotspots will be randomly assigned to control or treatment groups. Also, schools close to the hotspots to be intervened will be identified.
3. **Management with educational authorities:** The Ministerio Público has collaboration agreements with educational authorities and will activate them to establish mechanisms of collaboration and systematization of information with schools. Depending on the number of educational centers contained in the hotspots, inclusion of religious centers or vocational centers may be considered.
4. **Intervention in educational centers:** The Prosecutor's Office will deploy the interinstitutional group in the educational centers identified in the treatment group. Staff of the interinstitutional group will give prevention lectures to the students of the intervened schools.

D. EXPECTED RESULTS

The results of the project will be measured at the student and school level through different instruments that will be deployed in schools in the treatment and control groups.

Results at the individual level: This information will be collected through brief questionnaires applied to students in schools. The measurement tools will include questionnaires with "list experiments" designed to elicit more honest answers to sensitive questions that respondents are expected to lie about (e.g. drug use).

1. Reduce the number of students involved in criminal activities
2. Reduce the number of students who have been victims of crime

Results at the school level: These indicators will be measured with administrative information generated from schools.

1. Reduction in the number of cases of antisocial behavior in schools
2. Reduction of drop-out and absenteeism in schools
3. Reduction of criminal incidence in the area surrounding schools

E. POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

One of the main risks of the project is the available implementation time, which might be too short because of constraints imposed by holidays and the electoral process this year. This could limit the possibility of generating a meaningful change in students' behaviors and in the criminal dynamics around education centers. This risk can be minimized by extending the intervention by additional months in 2018.



F. PRELIMINARY TIMELINE

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Geo-referencing of criminal information						x	X	
Elaboration of hotspot maps						x	X	
Randomizations of hotspots and identification of schools						x	X	
Management with schools						x	X	
Intervention in schools						x	X	
Measurement of students and schools						x	X	
2nd session of the Academy for Security Analysis						x	X	
Preliminary data analysis						x	X	

Note: The x indicates the period of electoral closure in which activities cannot be carried out schools.

G. BUDGET

Item	Project costs		Cost sharing		Grand total
	JJ for MP	MP	Other		
<i>Personnel</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<i>Fringe Benefits</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<i>Travel</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<i>Equipment</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<i>Supplies</i>	\$ 55,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 55,000
<i>Contractual</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<i>Other</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Direct Charges	\$ 55,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 55,000
Indirect Charges	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 55,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 55,000

