

Strengthening Human Security and Community Resilience by Fostering Peaceful Co-Existence in Peru



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



Fast Facts

Country: Peru

Duration: March 2014 – December 2017

Implementing UN Agencies: UNODC; UNDP; UNFPA; UNLIREC; PAHO

Other Implementing Partners: Ministries of Justice; Education and Health; National Police; Regional Government; Municipality of Trujillo; NGOs

Budget: \$4,870,750.63 (**UNTFHS:** \$2,179,320.63 **Others:** \$2,691,430)

Key Words: Crime and violence reduction; urban regeneration; community security; youth; women

BACKGROUND

Crime and violence are fast becoming a critical and pervasive threat to human security in urban areas of Peru, and between 2007 and 2011 the national crime rate increased by over 40%. Nowhere is this rise in crime and concerns among citizens about their own security more prevalent than in Trujillo, in the province of La Libertad. Considered Peru's second most dangerous city, the citizens of Trujillo live in fear of armed robbery, extortion, human trafficking, sexual violence, drug trafficking and gang-related violence. In addition, limited economic opportunities and an underperforming educational system, along with poor sanitation, a struggling health service delivery system and lack of safe public spaces further undermine the human security of Trujillo's most vulnerable communities and create fertile conditions

for the proliferation of violent gangs and criminal networks. Living in informal settlements at the city's edge, Trujillo's poorest and most marginalized communities, consisting primarily of rural economic migrants, bear the brunt of this rising crime and violence. In these communities over 40% of residents have reported having been victims of crime in 2013. At the same time, these vulnerable communities are also stigmatized as those responsible for the increase in crime across the city. Therefore, while the Government of Peru has made significant gains in the country's fight against crime, these top-down measures must be accompanied by bottom-up community-based mechanisms which address the root causes of crime and violence in Peru.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The programme aims to develop a sustainable and multi-sectoral model for reducing crime and safeguarding human security in three of the most vulnerable and at-risk communities of Trujillo, with particular emphasis on empowering these communities. This is to be achieved by establishing

practical and replicable models for: (i) an integrated and prevention-oriented program to reduce serious crime rates; (ii) reducing gender-based violence in high-risk, crime-ridden communities; and (iii) reducing youth involvement in criminality.

BENEFICIARIES

Overall, the programme targets around 11,750 direct beneficiaries in the communities of El Porvenir, La Esperanza and Florencia de Mora. This includes 1,600 women and female adolescents particularly vulnerable

to crime and violence, 7,600 adults and adolescents in vulnerable and high-crime areas as well as public sector officials and leaders from civil society and the private sector.

APPLYING THE HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

Reducing urban violence and crime required more than simply improving law and order; it demanded a comprehensive approach to address the full range of human insecurities driving criminality. To achieve this, the human security approach provided an integrated framework to tackle the many insecurities faced by Trujillo's most vulnerable communities. For instance, the programme improved healthcare in three target areas while offering vocational training and income-generation workshops. Simultaneously, it carried out activities to reduce gender-based violence, eliminate the circulation of small arms, and educate youth on issues such as human trafficking, sexual and reproductive health, and alternatives to criminality.

The long-term success of reducing crime and violence also depended on effective cooperation between local authorities and the communities they served. To strengthen this State-society relationship, the programme adopted a protection and empowerment framework that aimed to enhance the capacity of local government, police, and the justice sector to better protect communities while empowering residents to

engage with authorities and safeguard themselves against violence and crime. For example, police were equipped with crime-mapping software and training to optimize resource deployment, while justice sector officials received specialized training in preventing, investigating, and prosecuting organized criminal groups. At the same time, community members were empowered through vocational, entrepreneurial, and sports programs designed to promote a culture of peaceful coexistence in the city.

Finally, past efforts to reduce violence and crime in Trujillo often relied on national or international best practices. However, this programme engaged affected communities and local authorities in both its development and implementation, ensuring that activities addressed the specific threats and existing capacities unique to the communities of El Porvenir, La Esperanza, and Florencia de Mora. As a result, the programme produced a localized model for participatory community development and crime reduction, which could be replicated across the city.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

The programme's most notable achievement was its success in strengthening crime prevention and enhancing community security. By establishing updated baseline data on serious crime rates, urban crime patterns, and community perceptions of insecurity, the programme informed the design of targeted, evidence-based interventions. Subsequently, capacity-building sessions were conducted for: 75 police officers and related officials, equipping them with skills in crime trend analysis to optimize law enforcement in vulnerable areas; 180 community leaders to implement initiatives that effectively reduced the circulation of small arms; 750 individuals in crime prevention, investigation, and prosecution, contributing to a significant reduction in community crime rates; 900 individuals on practical measures to enhance safety and well-being with an emphasis on human security; 1,500 adolescents on the rights of children; and 110 educators on youth empowerment.

Prevention of gender-based violence and the reduction of human trafficking were also central to the programme's efforts. By training 520 health professionals, civil society members, and social workers in targeted prevention techniques, the

programme enhanced community capacity to protect at-risk individuals. At the same time, women and girls gained access to education, health services, extracurricular activities, and vocational training, empowering them to build self-esteem and secure sustainable employment opportunities.

Championing innovative approaches to justice and conflict resolution, the programme introduced alternative methods to incarceration for adolescents, emphasizing restorative justice and rehabilitation. As a result, vocational and career development were key components of the programme and provided self-sustaining opportunities for adolescents and young adults in communities heavily impacted by organized crime, reducing gang involvement and offering pathways to legitimate livelihoods. These initiatives bolstered resilience against criminal influences and fostered long-term community development.

Throughout the programme, stronger collaboration between national institutions, local communities, and civil society facilitated the establishment of localized, participatory and integrated response frameworks essential for sustainable peace and development.