

## Improving Public Safety in Mexico through a Community Policing Model

One of the priorities of the Prosperity Fund is to strengthen Mexico as an inclusive and accountable democratic state to advance its development in the understanding that democracy, human rights and rule of law serve as a foundation for all aspects of sustainable development. Where the rule of law thrives, there is improved social well-being, which leads to greater economic growth and prosperity, and a better business environment, in particular for foreign companies. The issue is particularly strategic in Mexico: according to The Global Competitiveness Report 2014-2015 elaborated for the World Economic Forum, Mexico's main barriers to develop its economic potential are situated in the institutional environment category—and specifically in the organized crime and reliability of police services. Moreover, violence has an important impact in the country's economy: in 2014 it was estimated to be 233 billion US dollars, 17.3% of GDP.<sup>1</sup> Security costs for businesses are in average 4% of their operating costs in Mexico, and a significant number of businesses decreased activity as a direct result of crime.<sup>2</sup>

The project "Improving Public Safety in Mexico through a Community Policing Model" largely builds on the UK's experience to achieve its goals. With the support of the British Embassy in Mexico, Fundación Idea analysed Northern Ireland's experience in transitioning from a militarized to a proximity police, and organized a workshop between detectives from Northern Ireland and high-level Mexican officials. London's Metropolitan Police was also studied in depth, and will be presented to Mexican decision-makers.

In both cases, the UK was positioned as an example to follow, and also played an important role as a convener. The sharing of these practices were the opportunity to bring together high-level decision makers of different government agencies, and make them work collectively on a national Community Policing Model.

The benefits for the UK are twofold. In the short term, to be perceived as an example to follow and as a key partner for the improvement of the rule of law and the relationship between citizens and law enforcement officials. In the medium term, the improvement of the way the police works and is perceived will improve the business environment, in particular for foreign companies.

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<sup>1</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace, *Mexico Peace Index 2015*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*