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# Evaluation of the Exchange and Technical Assistance between the Swedish Police and the National Police in Nicaragua

Summary of the Proactive Community Policing Model



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# List of Abbreviations

NNP	Nicaragua's National Police
PCP	Proactive Community Policing Model
SSR	Security Sector Reform
CPSD	Social Crime Prevention Committees
CMN	Commissioners for Women and Children
DAJUV	Directorate of Youth Affairs
PIV/S	Victims and Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence
MNC	Commissioners for Women and Children





# 1. Introduction

## PROACTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING MODEL NICARAGUA

Central America has become one of the regions with the highest levels of insecurity. However, there are notable differences between countries and in comparison with its neighbours in the North, Nicaragua has lower recorded violence and crime rates. Of the various factors influencing this, the role of *Nicaragua's National Police* (NNP) should be highlighted, in particular its policing model characterised by a preventive, proactive and community-oriented approach. Nicaragua's National Police work "from, by and for" the community and this task has turned the region into a successful example to follow.

Sweden and Nicaragua's National Police have been working in cooperation for almost 20 years. The collaboration began with a project on children's rights with Save the Children Sweden, developing over the years into extensive cooperation programmes. In this context, the Nicaraguan police, with support from Sweden, built the *Proactive Community Policing Model* (PCP), an endeavour now recognised in the region for its efficiency in combating insecurity.

There are many valuable *lessons learned* to be gained from the PCP model and the experiences exchanged between Sweden and Nicaragua. Security Sector Reform (SSR) can fuel debate and provide examples of best practices to combat violence and insecurity in Central America and the rest of the world.



## 2. Objectives and description of the PCP model

Since launching their cooperation, Sweden and the National Police of Nicaragua have worked together to strengthen and improve the Nicaraguan police model, introducing it in the region as a successful example in public safety. Below is a brief description of the context in which the PCP model was developed, a conceptual synthesis and a presentation of police working methods of the model.

### 2.1 SOME INFORMATION FOR PUTTING THE PCP MODEL IN CONTEXT

Police work with the community has a long track-record in Nicaragua, and the progress it has made both in public safety and in Proactive Community Policing (PCP) has been increasingly *recognised* by regional and international actors.

Unlike other police agencies, the National Police of Nicaragua is distinctive in the fact that it arose from a key social and historical moment, namely the *Sandinista revolution*. The Sandinista Police Force was established on September 5, 1979, requiring deep partisan commitments in line with government policy objectives. In 1990, following a complex process of transformation relating to the transition to democracy, the police force emerged as a non-partisan civilian institution, renowned for its professionalism and level of organisation. The National Police enjoys a *great level of respect and confidence* among the population.

The police model implemented by the National Police of Nicaragua (PNN) is *closely tied to* this historical, social and political context. It is important to bear this in mind when taking lessons learned for future programmes of cooperation with police in other countries, and when assessing the *potential for replicating* the Nicaraguan model or specific practices (e.g. working methods) in other contexts.

In the last decade, the continuous development of the Nicaraguan police model has been accompanied and stimulated by cooperation with Sweden through extensive programmes offered by Sida, including technical assistance from the Swedish Police. Other international cooperation partners have also supported efforts by the NNP to modernise and strengthen in-

stitutions and police work. One result of these efforts is the *conceptualisation and implementation of the Proactive Community Policing model* (PCP), thus named in 2007.

## 2.2 THE CONCEPT OF PROACTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING

The NNP describes the PCP Model as “*the operating system for all organisational forms established in the territory. As a highly precautionary principle, its main policy is Police – Community relations, from where it derives its community and proactive characteristics and cuts across all lines of National Police work.*”.

The Model’s objectives are to:

- *Modernise and strengthen police work;*
- *Recruit and train well-rounded police officers with a solid work ethic and dedication to the service;*
- *Strengthen the police’s organisational system, improving communication as well as internal and external coordination.*
- *Improve coverage and bring police services to the community;*
- *Involve the community in addressing risk factors for enforcing competition law.*

From the outset and at every stage of its institutional development, the police model the Nicaraguan police has developed has been *focused on establishing close relations with the community* to ensure that police take into account citizens’ perceptions and create favourable conditions for mobilizing the community in preventive action. The model proposes that the police also forge relations with state institutions and local organisations in a concerted manner to analyse the conditions and circumstances that encourage crime.

The PCP model is not only a tool for police services, but a *concept and a philosophy* developed – albeit not exclusively – for institutionalising relations between the police and the community. Social prevention is a key element of the model.

The PCP model has 3 essential components, as described in the following figure:

Figure 1. The 3 components of the PCP model



In November 2001 the Director of the NNP implemented a *comprehensive policy regarding Police – Community Relations and Human Rights*. This was conceived as a tool to promote a change in attitudes and develop coherent and systematic relations between the police and the public as part of crime prevention, public safety and respect for human rights.

While Police – Community relations constitute a fundamental element, reflected in the motto *“From, By and For the Community”* – the PCP model should not be confused with or restricted to this aspect. The Proactive Community Policing concept includes a range of items, from efforts to improve the public image of the police to deep structural and operational changes for optimising resources and enhancing efficiency.

The implementation of the PCP model transcends the entire police force and is projected at 3 levels of decision-making:

- *The strategic level:* Why? What For? Decisions to optimize the use of existing resources
- *The tactical level:* Which method? How? When? Where? Decisions about work methods
- *The operational level:* What activity? How? When? Where?

Selection and planning of relevant activities (e.g. from house-to-house visits, organisation of shifts).

## 2.3 11 METHODS OF WORK

The PCP model rests on a series of 11 police working methods summarised in the following table.

**Figure 2. The 11 methods of work under the PCP model**

Method Name	Key Elements
• Six-point method	Inputs, strategy, action-plan development, action/implementation plan, communication and feedback.
• Patrolling and targeting	Prevention is part of the action and patrolling is not improvisation; police officers work to targets, resulting in tasks to achieve concrete results.
• Diversification of the policing system	Rotation of staff to promote integrated workflow.
• Policing techniques	Importance of police work in pairs Police intervention techniques, basic acting techniques, techniques for the use and handling of firearms
• Staff Management	Identifying strengths and weaknesses in management and supervision of human resources Continuous preparation, specialised training, staff turnover, motivation, individual performance monitoring (encouraging work ethic and identifying staff appointments and grading systems)
• Working Time Management	Ensure balance, fairness and equity in time and workloads to improve efficiency and effectiveness of police work Hourly variation, use of working hours, monitor schedules and hours worked
• Continuous preparation – “whole school”	Each police unit is part of the police education system, as an on-going process of improving the police force Training and retraining, creation of teaching posts, continuous improvement of teaching resources
• Internal and external coordination	Ensure coordination between specialties (e.g. Traffic, Public Safety, Commissioner of Women and Children) and community and public institutions (state, local and regional governments, universities, social service agencies), private organisations (unions, companies).
• Internal and external communications	Internal information flow (within the institution) and external (community and others, for example to respond to requests and publish results)
• Information collection and analysis	System of data collection, analysis and dissemination (e.g. establishment of an Information Centre)
• Management and control of material resources	Planning, organisation and allocation of material resources Needs-assessment, distribution, maintenance responsibility, registration and periodic inventory

# 3. PCP model implementation in Nicaragua

The PCP model in Nicaragua constitutes a combination of NNP best practices and new methods adapted to fit Nicaragua's current state of affairs, based on the successful experiences of other police forces, for the most part collated and taught by the Swedish Police.

## 3.1 ORGANISATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

The strengthening of the PCP model has led to organisational and institutional changes. Two steps, supported by Sweden, were fundamental:

- The creation of a *National Team* for the implementation of the PCP model. The national team brings together a group of policemen selected to ensure the implementation of PCP in the PNN model. National Team members assume the functions of planning, execution, control, supervision, advice, training, monitoring and evaluation.
- Management's development and approval of a *governing document – the methodological guide for implementing the PCP model – accompanied by a set of process indicators*, through the provision 001-09 by the head of the NNP.

The heads of sectors, Social Committees Crime Prevention (CPSD) and the Voluntary Police are emblematic figures of the Nicaraguan police model.

In Nicaragua, the police *sector chiefs* work for Public Safety and serve in a specific territorial area, where they try to establish links and bonds of trust with the community. To reach out to citizens, heads of sectors make “house-calls” on a regular basis.

The *volunteer police* is an auxiliary body and its support is subject to the delegations of the National Police of Nicaragua. Once selected, trained and having sworn allegiance, the volunteers accept the conditions of employment and provide police services to the community.

*Social crime prevention* is seen as the attention given to potential victims, potential offenders, the social environment and conditions that may encourage or reduce the risk of crime.

The Social Crime Prevention Committees (CPSD) were created as a form of citizen participation in order to focus attention on the demands of the community.

## 3.2 MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS BY EACH POLICE FORCE IN IMPLEMENTING THE PCP MODEL

Through their experience and supported by a team of experts from Sweden, the NNP has identified the following best-practices, presented in summarized form

### Public Safety and Police – Community relations

- The NNP has established smooth *communication channels*, direct and permanent contact with the community through participation in community meetings and direct relationships with neighbourhood community leaders.
- Work that is local, *decentralized and close-by* helps to improve the quality of police services.
- Given their understanding of social fabric and local environments, the support of the *heads of sectors* is essential for improving the work of the Commissioners for Women and Children (CMN) and the Directorate of Youth Affairs (DAJUV). Heads of sectors are a key element in the success of police – community relations.
- The creation and organisation of the *Social Committee on Crime Prevention* (CPSD) has been key to the Nicaraguan police achieving greater effectiveness.
- The *police volunteers* provide important support to the professional forces in crime prevention.
- The implementation of the PCP model requires some stability in police tasks. Therefore, it is important to create appropriate working conditions to motivate police forces.

### Police Academy and “whole school”

Based on the “whole school” model, the educational system for the Police in Nicaragua consists of 3 subsystems, presented below in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. The 3 subsystems of the “whole school” educational model**

- The subsystem’s mission is academic **education** for aspiring professionals from the NNP, active police personnel and support staff (Police Force basic, intermediate and higher levels; Degree-level educated, Master’s Degree). In Nicaragua, the Police Academy “Walter Martínez Mendoza” (Acapol) is incorporated in the Institute of Advanced Studies;
- The Subsystem’s **training** is aimed at active police officers and support staff, to provide skills that help them perform better in their specialties (training-needs-analysis, design of new programmes consistent with institutional demands, evaluation, etc.).
- The **continuous preparation** subsystem has as its mission to train both police and non-police personnel units (analysis of training needs for delegations and experts, upgrading skills, methodological guidance, design new programmes, evaluation).

This educational model has helped strengthen the implementation of the PCP model through a proper training process. Following is a selection of good practices developed in Nicaragua.

- *Regulating and institutionalising* training opens up tremendous possibilities for the PCP model, in that such training reaches all police forces and the education system is flexible, dynamic and contextualised in police development. Institutionalisation occurs through the formulation and implementation of a Police Academy *strategic plan* for the future.
- Training is an engine of innovation and the model’s dynamic nature encourages the PCP. The *transformation of the educational and training curriculum* at various levels and in a number of ways is a process that requires a lot of willpower and concerted efforts, but one which is critical to the success of the PCP model.
- In the process of curricular transformation, the need to improve skills and attitudes relating to the transverse axes of *gender* and *human rights* education was identified.
- Active and *interactive methods* – where students “learn by doing” – combined with simulation exercises and case studies (CASE methodology) have yielded very positive results both in the degree of student satisfaction and in applying new knowledge in the field.
- *Interaction and coordination between the different sectors of education or training* (towards interdisciplinary activities) helps set the foundation for a comprehensive endeavour, which is the essence of the PCP model.

### The Commissariat for Women and Children against Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Commissioners for Women and Children (CMN) work along a *specialised, comprehensive care* model that aims to support victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence (PIV/S). The model assists women, children and adolescents in breaking the cycle of violence through three stages: transformation of the environment (prevention, training, detection, monitoring), access to justice, and empowerment. The National Police coordinates its activities with civilian organisations (e.g. women's associations), educational groups, religious organisations, state institutions and social service specialists (psychologists, doctors, counsellors and social workers, among others). The figure of the *voluntary promoter* is a key element that allows for better community outreach and effectiveness in the work of social prevention.

With the support of Swedish experts, Nicaraguan MNCs have developed and implemented two specific methods, Duluth and Repulse, which are integrated into the comprehensive model and the concept of Proactive Community Policing.

**Figure 4. Duluth and Repulse methods against domestic and sexual violence**

- The **Duluth** approach is structured to work with groups of men on the issue of domestic and sexual violence. MNC social workers facilitate the sessions.
- The **Repulse** method involves working individually with violent males. The facilitators are CMN psychologists.

Good practices identified in Nicaragua are:

- Socialising of the issue of violence through the work of the CMN forms part of the preventive measures revamped by the PCP model. Comprehensively addressing the PIV/S, coordinating efforts and planning and concerted interventions can all achieve positive results.
- Permanent *communication flows* established by the CMN with institutions and organisations involved in combating domestic and sexual violence have contributed to *high levels of confidence*. Based on dialogue and communication, these mechanisms contribute to the PCP model.
- Among its objectives, the PCP model has set out coverage and bringing the police services closer to the community; this is therefore a factor in identifying risks in police matters and preventive action. The work of and with *voluntary promoters* across the country contributes to achieving this objective through lectures, training focused on preventing

domestic and sexual violence, public activities and processes in conjunction with the accompanying social workers and psychologists. The comprehensive model views the victims as potential promoters of human rights and gender equality, and the family as an actor of change within their own community.

- The use of *modern technology*, as introduced by the Duluth and Repulsive methods, has strengthened work on the integrated approach to combating domestic and sexual violence.

### Division of Youth Affairs and Juvenile Justice

The Nicaraguan police have a specialised structure whose main function is to care for children and adolescents: the Directorate of Youth Affairs (DAJUV). The preventive model applied by the DAJUV has three levels:

- Information, education and socialisation for children and youth in general;
- Diagnosis and psychosocial care for children and youth at risk of violent behaviour and substance abuse problems. Attention is also given to the family environment;
- Diagnosis, care and placement of youth involved in gang activity or in conflict with the law.

Good practices identified in Nicaragua are:

- The *coordination* of police work with other institutions involved in the problem of youth violence contributes to providing appropriate and comprehensive responses (e.g. institutes against alcoholism and drug addiction, youth associations, ministries of education and health, etc.). Successful examples of integration or reintegration of vulnerable young people reflects the abilities of police leadership, in coordination with civil society actors and public institutions.
- According to the evaluation of their own experiences, DAJUV considers that sport, cultural and religious activities help foster changes in attitudes of young people at risk of turning to crime.
- The prevention of youth violence and its follow-up *impact on reducing risk factors* of crime. Based on the PCP model, interventions unite various multidisciplinary groups: heads of districts, youth affairs specialists, security chiefs and heads of sectors.

- Reintegration activities in coordination with other institutions concerned, consisting for example of youth participation in training and prevention projects through lectures, conferences and seminars.
- The approach of community policing – in particular working with the *social environment* of young people at risk – facilitates social prevention, the core of the PCP model.

## 4. Lessons learned

The police work mainly in terms of local and national problems and challenges, with each force having its own characteristics. Therefore, we recommend exercising great *caution in extrapolation* of the strategies, procedures and working methods of the Nicaraguan PCP model. There is no absolute and sole model to adopt, either for institutional reform or to address international police cooperation programmes. It is essential that the implementation of the PCP model *transcend the entire* police institution and be continuously fostered based on feedback and reflection. Its transversal nature provides new opportunities to strengthen and modernise institutional communication systems.

The approval of the *guiding document* by the chief of police (Methodological guide and system process indicators) and the formation of a *team* responsible for the implementation of the PCP model are two key steps for successful initiatives. This institutionalisation of the model provides a common vision of the concept and facilitates the standardisation of the activities carried out in the PCP model framework.

*Internal articulation* between specialists and *external coordination* with the community, public institutions and civil society groups are keys to the success of the PCP model as they contribute to *dynamic, proactive* crime prevention. However, interaction and coordination with local organisations and public institutions is built over time and can encounter many challenges.

*Systemisation* allows for reflection on progress and challenges and an exchange of experiences within the institution and with external actors. This reflective process helps identify the necessary adjustments and strengthen the PCP model.

*Continuous updating of knowledge* and skills, as well as a proactive approach to training, provide a basis for police work and the PCP model to evolve, taking into account the social, political, economic and institutional situation in the country. The “*whole school*” system provides a proactive dynamic, strengthening the links between the technical, scientific, practical and theoretical aspects.

Experience has shown that higher *levels of coordination* and integration between the planning mechanisms of the Police Academy and police units have produced an environment conducive to progress in the implementation of the PCP model.

The PCP model requires that the *heads of sectors* (or similar figures in other possible contexts) receive appropriate continuous training and have well-defined functions to optimize efficiency in carrying out their work.

*Acceptance levels* of victims and perpetrators of the new methods (e.g. Duluth and Repulsive) for dealing with domestic and sexual violence demonstrate the will of the community to participate in preventive and proactive approaches. The empowerment of stakeholders is a key element of the PCP model, contributing to greater trust in police work.



Sida works according to directives of the Swedish Parliament and Government to reduce poverty in the world, a task that requires cooperation and persistence. Through development cooperation, Sweden assists countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Each country is responsible for its own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge, skills and expertise. This increases the world's prosperity.

## Evaluation of the Exchange and Technical Assistance between the Swedish National Police and the National Police in Nicaragua

GLOBAL

The Nicaraguan police force is renowned for its professionalism and level of organisation and enjoys respect and confidence among the population. Its policing model, the Proactive Community Policing Model (PCP) is characterised by a preventive, proactive and community-oriented approach.

Sweden and Nicaragua's National Police have been working in cooperation to strengthen and improve the Nicaraguan police model, introducing it in the region as a successful example in public safety, an endeavour now recognised in the region for its efficiency in combating insecurity. There are many valuable lessons learned to be gained from the PCP model and the experiences exchanged between Sweden and Nicaragua.

This booklet is an executive summary of an evaluation of the Exchange and Technical Assistance between the Swedish police and the National Police in Nicaragua and presents the PCP Model.



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