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## SUCCESS STORIES

### **Lisbon community policing training strategy in the Padre Cruz Neighbourhood**

#### **Scope**

One of the main challenges in local policing relates to the need of building safer communities through preventive approaches and effective and trustful relationships between police and citizens. The community policing in Lisbon, implemented by the Lisbon Municipal Police (LMP) since 2009, in close articulation with citizens and local partners, embodies these approaches that have been crucial to set in place collective responses to tackle local security concerns, engaging citizens and local partners to work with the police as co-producers of community safety. In this context, the LMP has been developing, in the last years community policing projects with a training-action strategy focused on the police-citizens exchange of visions and perspectives to enable community policing teams to work closer and more effectively with social actors and residents in the context of local safety partnerships. Under this policing model, the police working in partnership with local partners and citizens - "Security partnerships"- requires a training strategy that contributes to develop in police officers social skills to sustain and enhance the police-citizen articulation, but that at the same time, requires the training of social partners in technical and relational skills on the identification and building up of local security responses together with the police.

In 2017, under the implementation of a new project of community policing project in Padre Cruz Neighbourhood, the police training was targeting, for the first time, not only police officers but community representatives, namely social workers and residents. Also for the first time, the venue of the training course took place outside the LMP headquarters, to be implemented in a venue in Padre Cruz Neighbourhood, a residential area of municipal social housing in Carnide Parish located in the northern area of Lisbon.

#### **Main objectives**

The main goal of the training was to improve police-citizens relationship and to enhance the cooperation between community policing officers, social workers and residents to put in place a community policing project in Padre Cruz Neighborhood. The training programme was build under a training action model to be implemented in community context, where participants, through group exercises and study visits (walking tours), were asked to put into practice, preventive and problem solving approaches to tackle security problems identified in Padre Cruz neighbourhood. The training strategy also aimed to develop participants networking capacity building for community safety, by improving participants technical, relational, intercultural and mediation competences.

## **Target group**

The training course targeted police officers and social partners working in the neighbourhood, in a total of twenty trainees. From the LMP participated two police agents selected to the community policing team in Padre Cruz Neighbourhood and six police officers of the LMP (three police officials, one police chief and two police agents).

From the community, participated two residents of Padre Cruz Neighbourhood (Residents Association) and ten social workers with intervention in Padre Cruz Neighbourhood (Child Center/SCML; Elderly Center/SCML; Social Center/SCML; Gebalis-Municipal Housing Management; Housing and Local Development/Lisbon Municipality).

The trainers were from the LMP, a sociologist and a psychologist from the Prevention and Security Division and two police officers from the Community Policing Brigade (a Chief and an Agent). Participated also in the organization of the training course, a technician of the Training Department of the Lisbon City Council (CML) and a technician of the Social Center of Padre Cruz Neighbourhood (the venue of the training course).

In the last day of the training, participated in the closing session of the training, the Deputy Mayor of Security of the Lisbon Municipality, the President of the Local Parish of Carnide/Padre Cruz Neighbourhood and the President of Padre Cruz Neighbourhood Residents Association, to support the implementation of the Safety Partnership to put in action the Community Policing Project in Padre Cruz Neighbourhood.

## **Methodology**

The planning of the training started in the last semester of 2016. The training course was a one-time event, implemented between 30 January and 10 February 2017 in five days (30/01; 2/2, 6/2, 7/2 and 10/2) in a total of thirty hours. It was a face-to-face training, with both theoretical and practical modules, and study visits to the neighbourhood, followed by working groups discussion and presentation of the case studies in analysis. In order to facilitate the participation of residents and local partners (social workers) it was implemented in different schedules (working hours and at the end of the day).

Also to facilitate participation, the venue of the training was in the facilities of one of the partners of the Padre Cruz Neighbourhood (SCML), with the exception of 1 day when the training took place in the LMP facilities. The training was included in the Lisbon Municipality Training Department budget for the LMP Annual Training Plan.

## **Main findings and conclusions**

The community policing training contributed to raise police awareness for the diverse cultural identities in the territory, improving their self-confidence to cope and manage situations of rising conflicts in the neighbourhood.

The fact that the training was located in the Padre Cruz Neighbourhood was an advantage, since social workers and residents representatives were in their "safe harbor", facilitating their willingness to communicate and share information with the police. The police trainees were able to listening to social workers speaking openly about the community security problems, which increased their knowledge about the concerns of the local population. This communication

process throughout the training allowed a closer relationship between the police officers and the other participants that openly shared their views, even the negative issues, without “pre-prepared speeches”.

The articulation established during the training between community policing officers and the other police trainees, allowed also a strengthening of their own articulation and a better knowledge of the problems of the neighbourhood, namely through the field visits.

The training allowed social workers and residents to be more aware about the police challenges when implementing a community policing project. They had the opportunity to learn the constraints felt by police officers at organizational level.

The police articulation with social workers and residents during the training facilitated the welcoming of the new community policing team to the neighbourhood. The training allowed the police trainees to have “faces” in the neighbourhood, promoting a closer bond to the community when addressing occurrences in the Padre Cruz neighbourhood. The training also contributed to the community policing team feel the neighbourhood as their responsibility, and that they needed to find solutions together with the safety partnership, for the problems communicated by the population, since a neighbourhood with “faces” requires a closer and faster communication process to give feedback on what actions were deployed to address the problems reported.