

### PP3. INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF LOCAL SECURITY ISSUES AND POLICE PROGRAMS

[Tags: Community policing, Citizens, Awareness]

Raising public awareness of local security issues, as well as of the initiatives and programs implemented by law enforcement authorities contributes to fostering trust between citizens and LEAs. Police should continue to inform citizens about the objective risk they might face, using different educational programs, including the distribution of booklets containing concise and relevant information about crime rates, the criminal justice system and the activity of the police in general.

The Internet, social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook) and different apps can support police in raising public awareness on security issues.

Examples:

- The City of London Police YouTube channel shows videos created to raise public awareness of a number of key issues. The force recently released CCTV footage through YouTube of a City worker having his mobile phone snatched from his hand in the Square Mile by a thief on a bicycle to highlight the need for members of the public to look after their belongings. Within two weeks the footage had been watched by almost 300,000 people across 10 countries and was picked up by UK print and broadcast media.
- The Centre of Roma Culture and Language will allow, through native speaking Roma trainers and modern equipment, courses in for Roma culture and language awareness 200 police officers working in rural areas where there are Roma communities. The courses will aim to improve the communication capabilities of police officers who work in Roma communities, the correct understanding of culture and traditions, as well as ensuring a climate of respect for human rights and strengthening mutual trust to increase public safety in rural areas. Another novelty is facilitating the organization of forums for public safety in several rural localities, as well as preparing for those localities, where citizens consider necessary, of diagnosis and local security plans.
- Chesapeake Habitat for Humanity (CHH) has made a commitment to develop strategic partnerships that, together with the time and resources invested in building homes in the community, seek to create a family, neighbourhood, and community transformation. With this goal in mind, CHH has recently partnered with the Baltimore (Maryland) Police Department (BPD) to improve public safety. The collaboration aims to achieve five outcomes:
  - ✓ Increased community stabilization;
  - ✓ Expanded education for CHH homeowners;
  - ✓ Improved officer/community relations;
  - ✓ Increased public safety awareness;
  - ✓ Enhanced teamwork among district commanders and their officers.

Mode of implementation

- Information included in public awareness campaigns should be clear and should focus on local problems;
- Information should be provided in a reliable and regular manner;
- Police officers should always display a friendly attitude towards the public;

- Police officers should also be made aware of the value to policing of increasing public trust;
- If apps are used for public awareness purposes, they should be specifically created for this purpose;
- Continuous provision of digital information nodes, linking to other government and social services.

Resources:

- Gill, C., Weisburd, D., Telep, C.W., Vitter, Z. and Bennett, T. (2014), "Community-oriented policing to reduce crime, disorder and fear and increase satisfaction and legitimacy among citizens: a systematic review", *J Exp Criminol*, Published online: 2 August 2014 (electronic supplementary material).
- Petre, R.T. (2012), "External grants as a catalyst for new approaches in preventing and combating crime. Case study on an externally funded project aiming at expanding the concept of community policing in rural areas", in *Paradigme Social Sciences Journal*, Vol. 5, Issue 5; 2012.
- E-newsletter of COPS Office, Volume 2, Issue 5, May 2009.