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## SUCCESS STORY

# Promoting Community Policing in Bajo y Medio Atrato

**CIMIENTOS has facilitated different initiatives with the participation of the Community Police to promote peaceful coexistence.**



*Policemen in Chocó attend a training to learn the new Community Policing Approach Methodology.*

Photo: USAID CIMIENTOS

Due to the proximity with Panama and the Pacific Ocean, the Bajo y Medio Atrato Region is a strategic corridor for drug trafficking resulting in prolonged conflict over territorial dominance between Paramilitary and Guerrilla Groups. State presence in this area has been limited because of the armed conflict and the minimal presence of police. The police that did work in this region focused on combating these groups rather than maintaining community conditions that promote peaceful coexistence and citizen security.

At a National level, the GOC is currently implementing a program called Plan Nacional de Vigilancia Comunitaria (National Plan for Community Policing) to establish the roles and responsibilities of Community Police, different from those of the military. This recent transformation from a military-like police force to community policing focuses on 3 different areas which are: a community focus where organized duties and moral obligations are promoted among all people, a sense of responsibility for those in charge of promoting policing, and lastly a system of citizen participation which clearly structures different initiatives that are lead and implemented by the Community Police.

As a result, CIMIENTOS has facilitated trainings in the municipalities of Acandí, Unguía, Riosucio, Carmen del Darien and Murindó to promote community policing which in turn strengthens models for neighborhood citizen security. These trainings cover the areas of: use of tools to implement the Peaceful Coexistence and Security Observatories and workshops for 70 policemen to improve community policing. Additionally, activities for conflict resolution were held with over 100 students which include Movie Nights, substance abuse prevention and soccer tournaments that promote citizen participation particularly building closer bonds with authorities.